



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources  
and Agricultural Sciences

# Illuminating Filters of Perception

- An interview survey with leading landscape architects on their approach to site



Anna-Maria Pershagen  
Master's Thesis • 30 credits  
Landscape Architecture Programme, Ultuna  
Department of Urban and Rural Development  
Uppsala 2020



Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences

Department of Urban and Rural Development, Division of Landscape Architecture, Uppsala

Master's thesis for the Landscape Architecture Programme, Ultuna

Course: EX0860, Independent Project in Landscape Architecture, A2E - Landscape Architecture Programme - Uppsala, 30 credits

Course coordinating department: Department of Urban and Rural Development

Level: Advanced A2E

© 2020 Author's name, email: Anna-Maria Pershagen, annamia12@hotmail.com

Title in English: Illuminating filters of perception – an interview survey with leading landscape architects on their approach to site

Title in Swedish: Att synliggöra filter för perception - En intervjuundersökning med ledande landskapsarkitekter om deras plats tillvägagångssätt

Supervisor: Thomas Oles, SLU, Department of Urban and Rural Development

Examiner: Åsa Ahrland, SLU, Department of Urban and Rural Development

Assistant examiner: Anna Robling, SLU, Department of Urban and Rural Development

Cover image: Art by Judy Chicago, artist, selected from Artstor Digital Library via SLU

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Original format: A4

Keywords: site, genius loci, intuition, place, place theory, education, site, unconventional analysis, site analysis, perception, filter, dowsing, feng shui, geomancy, alternate approach

Online publication: <https://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

## PREFACE

Standing on the edge of the final step of education, I look back and see it as a relatively long-drawn-out process between different viewpoints on the many subject areas constituting the landscape architect profession. I guess that most of the time, we are attracted to some kind of specialization that can take us on the journey. Or maybe it is that we have always carried along a feeling or inner certainty, like a layer of knowledge just awaiting to be illuminated, leading us further ahead.

The strange, mysterious and ambiguous always had a special appeal to me and with this work I took the opportunity to dive deep into what might correspond to the more abstract area of landscape architectural theory and practice.

My driving force is mainly a curiosity to understand and to create an opportunity for translating the unknown, to broaden perspectives and with the hope of contributing to what is considered true to the individual. I am looking for development in relation to places and the conscious reflections that this also seems to define - this intention helped in finally putting the name on the work.

I hope that you, dear reader, will come across things herein that contribute to your knowledge linked to place and landscape architecture, also raising new questions and personal reflections considering the nature of site and its human connection.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a quite staggering, interesting journey in both experience and a work process sense, and I really want to thank the people who took their time to talk to me, giving me a glimpse on their reality in relation to site, which provided authentic content and created the very essence of the work.

I especially want to thank friends and family who have been supportive and helpful throughout it all. I would also like to give my warm thanks to my supervisor Thomas Oles for enlightening conversations and ideas as well as helping me to raise the academic bar.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. L. Persson', written in a cursive style.

Uppsala, May 2020

# Abstract

The starting point for this work was an interest in the concepts of genius loci, intuition and unconventional site analysis. Since the 70s, the genius loci has had a definition in landscape architectural theory, but the contemporary attitudes on the concept as well as its implementation in practice are less illuminated in research. During education I also experienced a conflict regarding the site analyzes we were taught and personal experiences I have had in places. By doing interviews with landscape architects in practice, this work investigates attitudes and implications of site analysis, genius loci and intuition. The aim is also to provoke the established approach of site analysis by highlighting some unconventional methods. The conduct includes a qualitative interview study with six architects and a literature study that conveys some theories on place, intuition and unconventional methods.

What characterized site analysis was predominantly visual and technically oriented methods. The previous relation to the site together with the cultural context were also raised and affected the expectation of how the site is perceived. The concept of genius loci was used by most architects and related mostly to the conditions, background and history of the site. It was also considered a keyword for the conceptualization of the project, a personal approach to the profession, and in some cases linked to the "soft values" of the site. Intuition was conceptualized in the design depending on the various steps of the work process, as well as the designer's conscious attitude about it. In some cases, it was an aid in defining the genius loci itself. The literature study illustrates the unconventional methods of Chinese feng shui, Roman geomancy, and describe the approach of two site workers (one bioenergetic counselor and one dowser).

Regarding site analysis, the work has given insight on the importance of making a clear distinction between its different parts and raising the awareness on their implications. This also links to the presented unconventional methods, whose value to landscape architecture is the opportunity to think in a different way in regards to the site. This, since the work indicates that the approach to site influences its analysis and consequently its design. Emphasizing what is embedded in the experience of the site at an early stage may deepen the understanding of it, as well as helping to define the genius loci. At last, this work seeks to inspire a more holistic approach to site, where both intuition and a sensory oriented perception can be tools to achieve this goal.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION – TOWARDS AN EXPOSITORY PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>7</b>
<hr/>	
PROJECT OVERVIEW	9
AIM	9
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	9
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>10</b>
<hr/>	
LITERATURE STUDY	10
INTERVIEWS	13
<b>CHAPTER 1 – PLACE</b>	<b>19</b>
<hr/>	
1.1 NORBERG-SCHULZ ON PLACE	19
1.2 HUMANISTIC GEOGRAPHY ON PLACE	22
1.3 UNCONVENTIONAL UNDERSTANDINGS ON PLACE	24
<b>CHAPTER 2 – INTUITION</b>	<b>28</b>
<hr/>	
2.1 INTUITION IN THE CONTEXT OF DESIGN	28
2.2 INTUITION DOES NOT COME TO AN UNPREPARED MIND	30
2.3 THE BACKSIDE ON INTUITION	31
<b>CHAPTER 3 - INTERVIEWS WITH ARCHITECTS</b>	<b>33</b>
<hr/>	
3.1 INTERVIEWED ARCHITECTS	33
3.2 SITE ANALYSIS	36
The visit	36
The analysis	39
Perspectives on the site	40
Site analysis; key aspects	41
3.3 GENIUS LOCI	42
Genius loci as the conditions and possibilities of the site	43
A larger perspective than site	44
Personal applications	45

Factors affecting the genius loci in practice	46
Genius loci; key aspects	48
3.4 INTUITION	49
Intuition in relation to the design process	49
The dangers of intuition	52
Intuition; key aspects	53
<b>CHAPTER 4 – THE MEETING OF PERSPECTIVES</b>	<b>55</b>
4.1 SITE ANALYSIS IN TODAY’S PRACTICE	55
THE ROLE OF GENIUS LOCI	56
THE ROLE OF INTUITION	57
4.2 AN UNCONVENTIONAL PERSPECTIVE AND APPROACH TO SITE	58
4.3 REFLECTION ON METHODOLOGY	59
4.4 TURNING TOWARDS THE LAST QUESTION AND FURTHER RESEARCH	61
<b>SAMMANFATTNING (SUMMARY IN SWEDISH)</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>71</b>

## Towards an expository perspective

Throughout the education, I've been especially interested in the term *genius loci* - the spirit of place, which, according to a lecturer seemed to be of greater importance historically in architecture as well as in landscape design. I personally have had many experiences on sites that do not seem to fit within the framework of the theories and/ or methods of site analysis we have undergone during the education.

One experience that illustrates this was during a study trip to Copenhagen. A few friends and I were out in the evening in the central parts and as we walked past an old church, then there was something in a corner behind a building that caught our attention. When we arrived in the place, it did not take long before we all felt a strong feeling of unease, like we shouldn't be there at all. I got goosebumps all over and everyone else felt the same, so we left pretty soon. What had awakened this powerful sensory oriented experience? The place itself was not very special, a cobblestone corner behind an old church. The place was quite dark and there was a wall pattern on the adjacent building which may have been what initially captured our interest in the place - but generating this kind of experience was totally unexpected. And how could the place have the same impact on all of us? We could have influenced each other to some extent, of course, but the experience of the place itself stands out as unique to me.

Undoubtedly, there have been countless events on the site that we could not see traces of today. Could it be that an event of very uncomfortable nature had taken place there at some time before? Did we pick this up somehow? Is there any explanatory model in the field of landscape and/or place theory for this kind of experience, or could it be that we need to broaden our perspective (and our language) in order to derive a better understanding and explanation?

To put this case into perspective, the authorities on Iceland take into account the homes of the elves, or the *huldufólkið*, before building houses and new infrastructure (Lidén 2015). According to experts at the national planning agency on Iceland, this occasionally comes up when areal plans are made (Dige Baldursson 2020) A rock or other natural formation that is supposedly home for elves may be considered as falling under the Icelandic act on cultural heritage (ibid.) Elves are considered important supernatural beings in part of the Scandinavian folklore and have references retained in medieval Icelandic tradition to the *álfablót* (Lindow 2003). This explains why the roads of the country sometimes make unexpected turns - with the purpose of avoiding the homes of the elves. According to locals, upsetting them is not a thing you want to do (Lidén 2015). In Sweden, places of cultural-historical value are

protected by the Cultural historic act or “Kulturmiljölagen” where, for example, graves and places of more immaterial value, such as holy and sacrificial places are included (Swedish National Heritage Board 2019).

During the education we were given the opportunity to work with various established analytical methods such as Lynch, Gehl and Jacobs, which are all at their base very visually oriented. An interesting and contrasting experience that was much more sense-oriented was a so-called “Dancewalk” that we did during a workshop day. Here the senses were given free space and we got the task of doing activities such as acting out a different behavior than what ought to be considered "normal" in that type of place. Other exercises were: walking barefoot and sensing the texture of the ground floor, climbing up lampposts and staying in places where people were not expected to stand still and writing down free associations while on a specific place, to name a few. We also got to listen to a voice recording as a guide around the city center, that encouraged us to sensory-oriented experiences at different places. In this way, we could challenge ourselves to start thinking completely different about places and how we analyze them than before.

The day of the “Dancewalk” was quite provoking and right after we discussed everyone's experiences. I remember thinking that this really opened up one's intuition in a place context and someone else remarked on how nice it was to use the body more as an instrument in the actual exploration of the place. It would have been so interesting to lead this discussion further into the classroom, which sadly was not done. The woman who held the workshop, Anna Asplind, was a dancer/ choreographer, and the whole experience made me think about the benefit of working more across borders with other professions. It could be a wonderful opportunity, not only for the education itself, but for finding new perspectives on site analysis. Are there perhaps more ways and other professions who work with places in a different way?

As students of landscape architecture, we are much more trained to evaluate the concrete data and not paying so much attention to the intuitive part of approaching a site. However, as humans we also have a much more sensuous part when looking at the world around us, a part that is irrational and maybe translates better to our instincts and/ or intuition. Intuition seems often to be tacit in the creative process, but what meaning does it have in actual practice and in the context of site analysis? It would be interesting to investigate these concepts more closely, how they are spoken about as well as how they are being applied. I don't think that



the spirit of place ever can be neglected either, we maybe just don't have an appropriate language for it to describe it and/ or getting closer to it.

In this work I intend to investigate site, genius loci and intuition by doing interviews with architects in practice. My curiosity about how they talk about and conceptualize around these concepts could maybe tell something about what signifies site analysis today. I will also make a brief literature study, focusing on the referred concepts as well as highlighting some unconventional approaches to site.

In addition to landscape architects and students, the work is aimed for researchers and teachers in the educational field of landscape architecture, as well as those who are interested in place theory and the concepts of genius loci and intuition. My hope is that this work can act as an eye opener for students, teachers, researchers and others who are interested in places - their analysis as well as their soul. That it may fairly present some alternate ways of approaching and understanding place than those primarily taught during education. Probably it will also shake and challenge entrenched ways of thought and perspective, which is a necessity for development to take place. Hopefully, the reader lands in a greater humility before places, large and small.

## Project overview

### Aim

- This thesis aims to investigate site analysis, focusing on the concepts of genius loci and intuition and the aim is also to provoke the established approach of site analysis by highlighting some unconventional ways.

### Research questions

- What signifies site analysis in practice today for landscape architects?
- What role do the concepts of genius loci and intuition play for landscape architects in the design process? In regards to the site?
- Should the implication of the answers to the above stated questions be expanded?

## Methodology

When I started searching for information, I used keywords such as *genius loci*, *place*, *place theory*, *alternate place theory* and *intuition*. The overall impression was that there are a lot of works dealing with these topics separately. I did not find any research that brought the concepts together in a landscape architecture perspective. An identified deficiency would thus likely be a thesis that looks at some fundamentally different approaches and perspectives regarding place theory and site analysis, and also tries to link it to current practice. My idea was therefore that information sources from both theory and practice could probably give a better overall picture and also contribute in creating an interdisciplinary overview of the given concepts and their contemporary implementation. Hence, in this work I will investigate site analysis, *genius loci* and intuition by doing an interview survey with professionals and a literature study. Some unconventional approaches to site analysis will also be highlighted in the literature study. The work is written in English with the hope of reaching out and being able to engage a larger audience. However, this raises some semantic issues as all of the interviews (done by me) were done in Swedish and some expressions do not directly translate to English. Thus, some editing was needed in the translation of the empirical material from the interviews, while trying to keep the core meaning in what was being said.

This study is primarily an attitude study that wishes to be an indicator of the current situation in the work field, but also hopes to be able to raise issues relevant to the educational field of landscape architects as well as place theory. It is a qualitative study with few interviewees and does not claim to be representative for a large target group, but rather serve as an indicator of what further studies need to be done.

## Literature study

The concepts of site analysis, *genius loci* and intuition are complex and contain many different approaches in research as well as in the landscape architectural field. Because of the scope of the work, I have limited the number of theoretical sources and I chose to use Christian Norberg-Schulz's definition as the basis in relation to the concept of *genius loci* – this since he was the one which most other works referred to, when I used the concept as a keyword in my search.

Norberg-Schulz was a Norwegian architectural historian and critic that made a notable influence in architecture and urbanism during the second half of the twentieth century, and especially in regard to the concept of *genius loci*. In his book “*Genius loci: towards a*

phenomenology of architecture” (1979), he traces the Roman origins of the concept and then attempts to concretize it by relating it to place identity, following the guidelines of the renowned philosopher Heidegger. Norberg-Schulz later wrote an additional article; “Genius loci – om platskvalitet” (1992), where he further develops his reasoning around the spirit of place in the problematization regarding the increasing loss of natural and man-made places in modern time, and the world-wide spreading of homogeneity in cities and urban space. I found the article to give further depth to Norberg-Schulz’s ideas, as well as it links to my work in that it conveys the value on the natural essence of the place.

Since the philosophical branch of phenomenology was a starting point for the ideas of Norberg-Schulz, the philosophy is also addressed in the work, although not described in depth but rather in a way that clarifies its connection to the context of place. Phenomenology also emphasizes the emotional and experiential meaning of human consciousness, which further strengthens its connection to my work.

In order to put the concept of genius loci in a larger context, I realized I needed to broaden the perspective on place by getting an overview of different place-theories. Tim Cresswell’s book “Place - a short introduction” (2004) provided knowledge on this subject, led me further ahead towards the ideology of humanistic geography, and the Canadian geographer Edward Relph in particular. Since humanistic geography was an ideology that emerged parallelly to Norberg-Schulz’ ideas in the 70s, I concluded it as adequate input to further broaden the phenomenologically-based perspective on place. In his main work “Place and placelessness” (1976), Relph highlights the relational meaning places have on a person or a group and the consequences this entails to the place, which brought additional insight to me regarding the site per se. The other work by Relph that I refer to, although to a lesser extent, is “The modern urban landscape”(1987), which illustrates the extensive account of the development of the appearance of modern cities. From this book I retrieved the main concluding aspects that Relph believes are needed in the understanding of place and this complemented the earlier understanding by being more physically oriented.

In order to better understand intuition and its meaning in a landscape architectural context, I made the assessment that a diverse view with design as common denominator would be an applicable approach. Therefore, I chose to investigate intuition from different key standpoints; as a science-based understanding, its expression in the creative thinking process, and, if there was something that could speak against intuition regarding design.

In the perspective of science, using the article “Om abduktion, intuition och syntes” by Rolf Johansson (2000), was seen as relevant as he is professor in Architecture and also speaks of intuition from the perspective of design. Representing the creative perspective on intuition, Bryan Lawsons’ book “How designers think” (2005) provided insight into this by representing a model on the different steps in the creative process of a designer. Lawson is both professor in Architecture and a psychologist, which I also found to bring increased value and relevance. Regarding the possible bad with intuition, I looked into the book “Overlooking the visual - demystifying the art of design” (2010) by Kathryn Moore. Moore, professor in Landscape architecture, discusses the role of intuition for the designer in a critical way, as she argues that metaphysical concepts underpin much of current design theory and discourse, and she raises the consequences this imply for intuition and its use in design. Moore’s perspective put another dimension to intuition and design, which I thought relevant to address in the work.

In the study of the unconventional methods for site analysis in the literature study, I mainly used the book "Site divine - an alternate method of site analysis" by the American landscape architect Carlos Lanfranco. As he writes about the subject from the perspective of a landscape architect, the use of his book as primal source for the unconventional methods such as Roman geomantics and Feng shui is considered relevant. Even though the information search with regards to the unconventional methods was a little discouraging in the sense that there was not much available, I found an article by Hong-key Yoon, a contemporary doctor of Philosophy and also a cultural geographer. In his article “Chinese geomancy and traditional urban design” (2017), he highlights the validity of Feng shui as an ideology for urban design by discussing and demonstrating its value and strong historical influence on an entire continent. This I found to strengthen the presumption considering Feng shui's utility and also erased some of the misleading associations of modern times.

From the book by Lanfranco, I also retrieved statements from two alternate site workers. Although the interviews in the book are not very recent (the author interviews the site-workers in Ontario, Canada in 1997 - Lea Erlich on May 8, 1997 and Dean Perry on May 5, 1997, at a specific location which the interviewees had not received any prior information on, except an approximate address), their content was judged to have a qualitative originality that could not be denied.

Regarding additional source material and journal articles, I primarily used the SLU library database, Google Scholar and standard Google searches. For the sake of clarifying

choice of words and concepts throughout the work, the word *place* is used synonymously with the word *site*, and the same applies to *spirit/ soul of the site/place* and the term *genius loci*.

## Interviews

For my main method I took inspiration from Steinar Kvale's description of the qualitative research interview. This method is characterized by semi-structured conversations where the examination of the interviewee's perception of a phenomenon is at the center of attention. The interview form leaves room for a dialogue between the interviewed and the researcher so that both are given the opportunity to reflect on their own perceptions (Kvale 1997, p. 13).

### **Selection of interviewees - Partial convenience and target selection**

As the type of interview was qualitative and of a semi-structured nature, i.e. it goes into depth and each interview would take a relatively long time, the decision was first made to limit the number of interviews to between 5-10. Other factors that came into play while choosing the number of interviewees were the time frame and the availability of the interviewees.

The selection of the interviewed designers was made on the basis of a partial convenience and target selection. At first, I did a pilot with a landscape architect friend to get an idea about the interview situation and test the interview guide. I concluded not to use this material in the study, since it was a pilot it came out a bit too structured, and at this time the aim of the work was not very clear. However, it made me realize the potential benefit of emphasizing the semi-structured way of interviewing, which I brought with me into the other interviews.

In order to get a wider spread of the chosen architects, my goal was to interview people of several different ages, gender and work experience in the field. Previously during my education, I have had an internship at an architect's office where I got to know some landscape architects with different backgrounds and I chose to interview two of them. To increase the spread, I also thought it would be interesting to interview some very successful landscape architects and also a house architect.

### **Interviews with architects**

The architects were all interviewed in their office:

Thorbjörn Andersson October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 10.00 AM, at Sweco in Stockholm

Andrea Eneroth October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 10.30 AM, at Archus in Uppsala

Rolf Johansson October 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 13.30 PM, at SLU, Ultuna

Bengt Isling October 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 11.00 AM, at Nyréns in Stockholm

Ingalill Nahringsbauer October 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 10.00 AM, at Archus in Uppsala

Ulf Nordfjell October 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 15.00 PM, at Ramböll in Stockholm

I assumed that a suitable time frame for the interview would be 1-2 hours. This was later adjusted to become shorter as it did not seem necessary to sit for so long, landing on a total timeframe of about 1 hour per interview. The interviewees received no information prior to the interview, except I told them that the questions would revolve around their design process and that the exact topic was a secret. This was agreed upon but could maybe raise an ethical aspect, as it contradicted the method sources I found where the interviewer is encouraged to email out the questionnaire or at least inform the interviewees about the intended question area, also informing on the eventual risks and advantages entailed in the participation of the research (Jacobsen 1993, p.193) (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014, p. 107). My idea was that by not revealing the exact subject area at first, this could perhaps give an even more unfiltered and emerging reflection on the subjects of my interest while on set. Before the interviews were finished, however, I always confirmed the interviewees on what my work dealt with and I maintained that if they wanted, they could read the material before it was published. I also assured I would contact them concerning the suitability of publishing any material that could be perceived as sensitive.

### The qualitative interview – problematization and crystallizing

Doing a qualitative interview survey was seen as an obvious choice for the work. Mainly since the starting point of the qualitative interview is that reality can be perceived in different ways and the interviews provide an opportunity to take part in the person's reasoning, thoughts and experiences (Trost 2010, p. 43-44). The phenomenological approach is also the central point of departure in qualitative research, where reality for a person is equated with the relative experience about it (Brinkmann, Kvale, p. 44). I also return to phenomenology in the background section of this work as it forms the basis of Norberg-Schulz's conceptualization of *genius loci*.

I created an interview guide with introductory questions that focused more on the interviewee, as well as education and design process. The more specific questions linked directly to the given concepts and my research questions and these were avoided in the

beginning up to the middle of the interview, so that the interviewee would be able to reproduce as unfiltered a picture of their reality as possible, as well as encouraging the person to be able to control when various issues were raised.

Summarized the interview questions revolved around the following: The background and profession of the architect, the work process, the site, site analysis, genius loci and intuition. Through this method, I hoped to avoid losing any spontaneous information and/ or reflection linked to the concepts of my interest. This process was also inspired by the so-called Tratt-technique, which means that the interviewer starts with more general questions, and then becomes more and more specific (Ekholm & Fransson 1992, p. 73-74). Unless the requested concepts were mentioned until later than in the middle of the interview, these topics were raised by asking more specific questions. Not all general questions were asked in all interviews, as it would have taken too long. The further into the interview process I came, less of the general questions were raised according to this insight.

It was an art to try to keep the conversations semi-structured and also follow some kind of template, but the more experience I gained, the easier it became for me as a researcher to go on the feeling while at the same time listen and review the entire interview as it went on. In order to create a good interview environment, I focused on doing my best to appear neutral, yet polite and humble which is encouraged also by Jacobsen (1993, p. 7) At the same time, I think it is easier to open up and relax if the whole situation feels like a conversation of a more personal nature rather than a rigid interview.

Critically speaking, semi-structured interviews can provide extensive and incomprehensible empirical material that is difficult to analyze and sometimes the interviewees may not have answered the exact same questions. The advantages of the qualitative interview should be that more non-reflected nuances are given the opportunity to appear in the conversation, compared to a strictly laid-out interview based on a list of well-defined questions that are asked in chronological order. With a qualitative semi-structured arrangement, the interview material may provide a richer, more personal perspective.

I chose to create the interview guide first as well as to proceed with the interviews at an early stage. Doing the literature study later was an active choice to avoid affecting my own role as an interviewer, hoping to be able to be as objective as possible. In this way, I also wished to avoid leading the interviewee towards preconceived opinions about the concepts in question. This, I later discovered can be called *phenomenological method* and *reduction*, which means that the researcher "...tries to put the usual meaning and scientific knowledge of

the phenomenon in brackets in order to reach an unconditional description of its essence" (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014, p. 45).

## Interviews – Processing and presenting the material

By the end of all interviews, I listened to and transcribed the material myself. Listening is an art and the words are important, but these can, according to Jacobsen, also be seen as only part of the interviewee's signals as dressed up in words (1993, p. 65). As I initially filmed all the architects except one, this meant I had some filmed material to take a position on.

Watching the films added another dimension to the interpretation of the transcribed material, which probably influenced my assessment of the statements in the way that I as an interviewer then also made my interpretation based on e.g. eye contact, movement patterns, body language, mimicry, speech tone, stresses, pauses, faster and slower speech etc. These signals are purely physical characteristics, but according to Jacobsen there are also non-physical signals that cannot be perceived by the senses – as quoting him” That’s all that is not or which is not expressed, but which nevertheless holds a meaning” (ibid.).

Jacobsen also emphasizes a discovery made by Sigmund Freud that can be linked to this and to the qualitative interview as context. Freud argued that "it is strange that a person's unconscious can react on another person's unconscious without passing the conscious realm of any of them" (1993, p. 67). In the interview context, this means that there may be an exchange of information between the parties that is beyond the reach of their conscious minds and thus beyond control, but which can, however, be perceived by what Jacobsen calls "the third ear". Furthermore, he believes that intuition, or the instincts of a human being, are used by listening with “the third ear” and that rational thinking is devastating for this ability (1993, p. 66).

To get an overview and be able to categorize the transcribed material, I used coding as method. By coding certain sections with regard to keywords such as *intuition*, *genius loci*, *place/site* and its *analysis*, I was at a later stage able to more easily identify statements in divided segments. Coding is seen as a central aspect of grounded theory and content analysis of interview texts (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014, p. 241).

To further analyze the encoded material, as a next step I worked with narrative analysis. Narrative analysis is used in many different research areas and is particularly well suited to elaborate and elucidate temporal and social structures and intrigues in interview stories, by creating a narrative of representative statements (Kvale, Brinkmann 2014, p. 268) (Calander,



1999, p. 67). In this way I could highlight the interviewees' answers and attitude to my questions, creating meaning to the studied phenomenon, ultimately tying my reasoning together by organizing statements into a coherent story. After that, a compilation was made that opened into key aspects for each question area in order to give the reader an overview after each section.

As a final step, I discussed the results of the interviews and focused on answering the research questions, their referenced concepts, site approach, relation to the site and, in terms of perspectives on place. Here I also discussed relevant connections to the literature. The unconventional approach is discussed after this, followed by a reflection on methodology. At last I turned to the last question and conclusions of the work, also raising new issues and suggestions for further research.

## Material

Stand for cellphone

Cellphone 1 – film

Cellphone 2 – sound recording

Notebook and pen

## Modifications of method

My initial approach was to test film as medium for the interviews, and I also filmed all of them except one. I wanted to analyze body language as well as what was being said, which I thought would be an interesting contribution to my analysis. However, as time flew I had to reevaluate my method and concluded the sound recordings would be enough. (I describe the potential consequences on this in the “*Processing and presenting the material*” section above.)

## The interview survey - preparation and approach

### **Implementation - step by step**

1. I called the intended respondents for the interview (the architects) and informed them that I was currently writing my master's thesis in landscape architecture and that I would like to interview them. I said that I did not want to reveal the exact subject that my essay would cover, but that I wanted to ask questions about their design process. I informed that I wanted to film, which was accepted by all architects except one. Then we decided the date, time and place for the interview.

2. We met on the agreed location for the interview, which was the office of the architect.
3. I started by briefly presenting myself and my work and then started the recording (audio recording and film for all architects except one, only audio recording of this one).
4. The interview was conducted using an interview guide. I had access to pen and paper.
5. Before we parted, I explained that I would contact the interviewee if he or she wanted to before publishing, and if I judged the material to be sensitive in any way.
6. Afterwards, I spontaneously wrote down my impressions of the interview by hand.

## Interviewguide

I set up an interview guide for the interviews with the architects. My intention with this was that, with its help, I could better review the interview while it was going on and also try to ensure that the interview dealt with the intended talking points.

The interview guide contained questions that related to:

1. His/ her background and profession
2. Workprocess
3. The site
4. Site analysis
5. Genius loci and intuition



Painting from the Romantic period in 18<sup>th</sup> century England, the time when poet Alexander Pope got inspired to write his epistle on the genius loci. The motif shows a large space with a reflective man in its center.

## Chapter 1. Place

This chapter will present a few place theories and will initially illustrate Christian Norberg-Schulz's ideas along with his definition of genius loci, followed by the, at the time parallelly emerging theory of humanistic geography. The philosophical orientation of phenomenology is also mentioned here as it permeates the first two theory formations about place. The last section describes some alternate approaches to site, including geomancy, feng shui and, at last this chapter will illustrate two alternate contemporary site-workers' approach and perspectives on site.

### Norberg-Schulz on place

*Consult the genius of the place in all  
That tells the waters to rise or fall;  
Or helps the ambitious hill the heaven to scale,  
Or scoops in circling theaters the vale,  
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,  
Joins willing woods, and varies from shades to shades;  
Now breaks, or now directs the intending lines;  
Paints, as you plant, and, as you work, it designs.*

(Pope 1866, s 136)

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century England, landscape gardener was a whole new profession and with the above stated epistle, the English poet Alexander Pope seeks to inspire the gardeners on the importance of showing consideration for balance and landscape composition when designing their gardens (Cresswell 2004, p.129). The poem became a great source of inspiration for future interpretations and the development of the concept of genius loci.

Christian Norberg-Schulz was the architect who, according to Johansson (2019) in the 70s became interested in genius loci when he studied Heidegger's philosophy in the United States. With his book, "Genius loci - towards a phenomenology of architecture", he made an attempt to concretize this complex expression, which can be dated all the way to Roman times, when the genius loci was considered to be the protective spirit of a place. In the book he says that all people and places have a spirit that follows them through life and that it is of utmost importance that one develops a good relationship with their place of residence. He believes that man should manage this ever-present spirit by dwelling and thus realizing the genius of the place (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p.18, 23). He also discusses how today's people have an increased need to find meaning in places as modern architecture increasingly distances itself from the diversity of concrete places where, according to Norberg-Schulz, is where life takes place. It is in the missing of what is suddenly gone that drives the human to search for an increased awareness and understanding about the site, its meaning and essence (Norberg-Schulz 1992, s. 34).

### Between earth and sky

According to Norberg-Schulz, it is the concrete things that we find important to our daily lives that have real meaning when it comes to understanding the place as a natural essence. Trees, buildings, the sun, the moon, the stars, seasons and even emotions are included here as concrete building blocks in our existential content. Things that are not considered to affect one's direct experience of life are seen as abstractions and are thus not applicable. This includes molecules, numbers and other types of quantifiable data (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p. 6, 8). Cresswell argues that the purpose of the architect is the ability to read the site and then design accordingly, in a way that does not threaten its genius loci but rather emphasizes and protects it (Cresswell 2004, p. 130).

If places are the complex totality of qualitative data, phenomenology is a philosophy that, according to Norberg-Schulz, can help to describe places satisfactorily (1980, p.8). According to Brinkmann and Kvale, the philosopher Edmund Husserl founded phenomenology around

1900 and its main subject was to describe consciousness and experience, which was further developed to include the human life-world and later to also the human body and its actions in a historical context (Brinkmann, Kvale, 2014, p 44). The theory of phenomenology emerged as a backlash to science which was considered to provide abstractions and mental constructions. It had not been applied to any great extent in architecture before Norberg-Schulz, but more so in areas such as psychology, ontology, ethics and, to a certain extent, aesthetics. Clarified, phenomenology is the interpretive study of the human experience, thus the first-person perspective is put into focus, and the study of the conscious structures that arise in the directed experience of that person (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p. 8)(Phenomenology, 2003).



Perspective from the southern peak of the Swedish mountain Kebnekaise, exemplifying Norberg-Schulz's understanding of place as natural essence. The concrete elements of mountains, clouds and sky build existential content as well as adding meaning to the observer's direct experience of the place.

*“Time is not a phenomenon, but the order of phenomenal succession and change”* (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p.56)

Time is not necessarily able to change a place' genius loci, which is its inherent soul, but is seen more as an external factor in the context. Time is considered to manifest itself cyclically through days and seasons and is not something that can be perceived subjectively in the moment and thus not through the lens of phenomenology. However, for the sake of human identity orientation, it is important to try to keep a *stabilitas loci* on the site, which can be

maintained during historical changes and fashions that can affect the site. (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p.18).

The meaning of the place already exists through its natural environment, which is unique to that particular place. A person needs to "feel at home" according to an existential concept and when she does, it means in turn that the environment in which she dwells is meaningful (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p. 23).

The ideal design for places is according to Norberg-Schulz by complementing the natural place by concretizing, symbolizing and supplementing it with architectural elements in a sensitive way. Thus, a "site" can be transformed into "place" without risking that its inherent meaning - its genius, is lost, but rather strengthened and preserved. The architect works in the interface between people and place and have the task of creating places that people can relate to and dwell (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, p.179-180).

## Humanistic geography on place

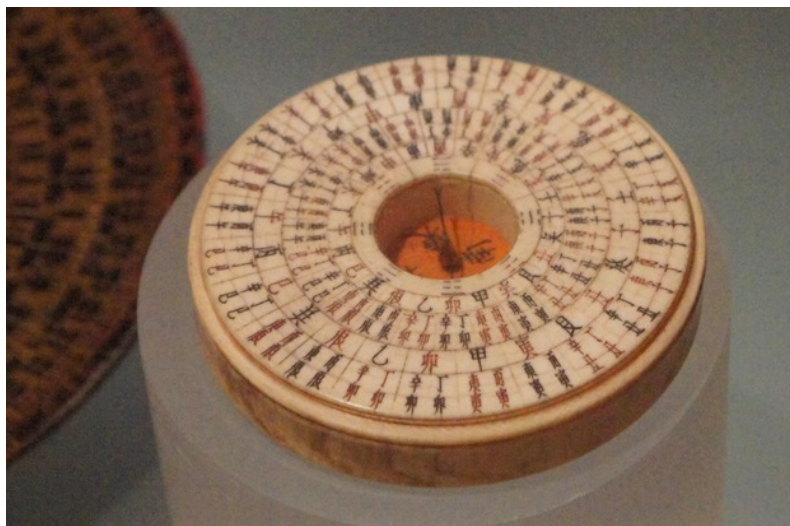
In the 1970s, an ideology that came parallel to Norberg-Schulz's ideas was humanistic geography. Here, the phenomenological and existential ideas were mixed with humanistic ideals, philosophy of Heidegger and Husserl (Cresswell 2004, p. 35), and formed together a counter-reaction to the modernist currents and technological advances that deprived the place of any notion of emotional or experiential meaning (2004, p.19).

An important writer on the topic of place was Edward Relph and his publication *Place and Placelessness* (1976). Here, Relph elevates the main point (which differs to that of Norberg-Schulz) on the importance of the experience a place has on a person or a group, rather than the inherent sense of the place itself. Although the place still has its material conditions, it is the human intention to form a relation with the place and the subjective experience that is being awakened by this action, that is considered crucial in the context. Relph concludes his ideas in three main aspects: The physical setting of the place, its activities, situations and events and the individual and group meanings created through people's experiences and intentions in regard to that place (Relph 1987, p.141).

Relph believes that the physical conditions of the place affect how a person perceives places, but that its community and culture can have an even more decisive effect, due to the deciding factor of subjectivity. For example, if a group of people denote the same associations and symbolism about a place, this can result in the identity of the place being strengthened and created from this (Relph 1976, p. 34). A place is, purely phenomenologically speaking, a

pre-scientific fact of life - as we cannot be conscious without being aware of anything, according to a term that philosophers call “intentionality”. The word refers to the “aboutness” of human consciousness and is a central aspect of phenomenology. According to Relph, the place is needed as a starting point for a person's being in the world. We then perceive places differently depending on who we are as persons. The role of subjective consciousness in relation to the place is something discussed by Relph, and to emphasize the importance of this, he cites Lukerman “The study of place is the subject matter of geography because consciousness of place is an immediate apparent part of reality, not a sophisticated thesis; knowledge of place is a simple fact of experience” (Creswell 2004, p. 37-38).

The spirit of place is according to Relph “the very individuality and uniqueness of places” (1976, p.48-49) and the ability of time itself to change this is not considered decisive for how we experience the place, but that it only affects one dimension of it. What it does effect, on the other hand, is how people's relationships with the place change; such as traditions, rituals, and other activities. These in turn express the spirit of the place and if these are changed over time it will have a significant impact on the identity of the place (ibid). To design adequately according to the premises of humanistic geography this brings some challenges for the designer. Introducing co-creative processes as part of the design process becomes a matter of course, since the very interpretation of the site depends on its relational connection to the people associated with it.



An example of a Chinese geomantic compass device, called *the luopan*. It displays an image of the cosmos and is used by a Feng shui practitioner to assign directions and positions in both time and space.

## Unconventional understandings on place

This section will briefly describe Roman geomancy alongside with the renowned philosophy of Feng shui as ways to approach and analyze place and at last it presents the site approach of two site-practioners – one bioenergetic counselor and one dowser. The statements presented are taken from the book "Site divine – an alternate method of site analysis" by the American landscape architect Carlos Lanfranco. The author interviews the site-workers himself individually, in-action at a specific site and at various occasions.

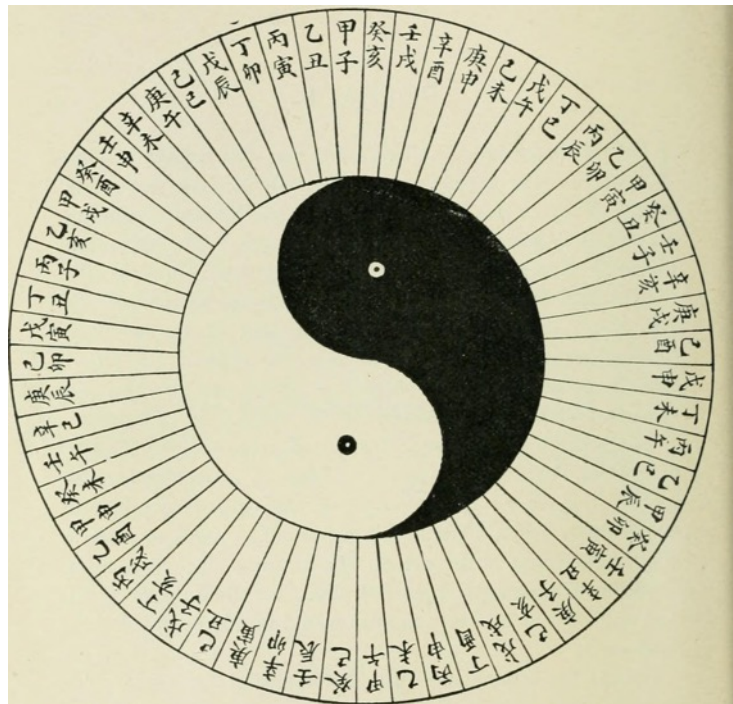
*“In approaching any site, ancient town planners first considered it on spiritual terms”*(Lanfranco 2008, p.44)

Geomancy was something the Romans relied on in their site analyzes and stems from a profound understanding about the Earth's natural elements and cycles. Geomancy originates from the Greek word *Ge, Gaia*, which means Mother Earth, and from *manteia*, the Greek word for divination (Lanfranco 2008, p. 43). According to geomancy, it is considered essential to understand the subtle energy flows from the earth in order to create a holistic design for a place. Therefore, the existing earth energies are not only powerful indicators of the inherent character of place, but geomancers also emphasize the importance of the so-called psycho-spiritual residue that exist on places. This residue is caused by people who passed through the place and is left as place-memories on that specific site, or memories that reside in a place as opposed to a person (Lanfranco 2008, p. 44).

Feng shui is originally an ancient form of Chinese geomancy that, according to Hong-key Yoon, a contemporary Doctor of Philosophy and a cultural geographer, cannot be categorized as neither a religion, superstition nor science because it contains some aspects of all three. The popularized term of feng shui is relatively modern and based on *dili* 地理 (‘Principles of earth’, referring to geomancy as well as geography) and *kanyu* 堪輿 (‘Heaven and Earth’, referring to geomancy). In Chinese and other East Asian city landscapes, feng shui has made a huge impact and is so deeply embedded that it makes it almost impossible to neglect while discussing the urban design, urban location and/ or urbanism in general (Yoon 2017, p. 735). Historically, the geomantic principles of feng shui was applied not only in the cityplanning, but most importantly when it came to the choice of location for several Chinese and Asian



cities. The location for the built structure ought to be carefully considered as the vital energy or shengqi 生氣 in the ground would affect it (ibid).



Yin and Yang symbol representing the primordial forces of the universe, which are also frequently used in the Feng shui in order to describe the organization of qi.

Lanfranco describes feng shui as an attempt to understand the patterns of *chi*, or the life force of the cosmos, claiming that the ancient Chinese after thorough observations had seen a link between the location of site, i.e. the characteristics of the landscape, and how prosperous humankind turned out in this specific place. Feng shui aimed to harmonize with nature rather than disrupt it, as this would supposedly lead to good fortune. For a human, whose fate being inextricably bound to the cycles of the Heavens and the Earth, the means of how to locate, orient and design one's dwelling thus became utterly important (Lanfranco 2008, p. 65). Hence, depending on the flow of the earthly underground energy, the shengqi, its friction with other landform conditions and how they faced certain directions ultimately brought about the actual vitality of the site. Yoon states further that a good starting point for a built structure attaining vital energy should include mountain slopes or background hills shaped like a horseshoe, giving shelter to the area of the planned house, grave or city and also having a watercourse in the front. The auspiciousness of this is explained by the mountains generating energy down to the site that cannot pass past the watercourse but is conserved to the site per se (Yoon 2017, p. 736).

A difference in perspective between traditional Roman geomancy and Chinese feng shui is the perceptual ability of the geomancer/ feng shui designer. According to Roman geomancers the psycho-spiritual residue or place-memories left on the site, was something that could be detected by the geomancer (Lanfranco 2008, p. 44), while in feng shui it is rather the earthly and cosmic energy (*chi*) patterns that are being emphasized, and these are considered impossible for human senses to comprehend. Therefore, feng shui uses a kind of compass orientation along with reading the form of landscape in order to understand the *chi* of the site (Lanfranco 2008, p. 69). Furthermore, in the Roman rooted geomancy even trauma and disturbances in the Earth's network will cause the energy or spirit of the place to become disharmonious and in a state of trauma. In order to restore the balance and make the place "healthy", special measures are needed, which is also the task of the geomancer (Lanfranco 2008, p. 44.)



Dragon – a being strongly occurring in both Feng shui and Chinese culture – often described as having its genius stronghold in the landscape, especially in hills and/ or mountains, adding vital *chi* to the place.

### Dowsing with the body as instrument

Concluding that different types of geomantic expertise may provide essential information about sites, Lanfranco also seeks to illustrate examples of the contemporary use of geomancy

in his book by making a case-study with some site workers. Referring to an interview he made on a specific site with a bioenergetic counselor named Lea Erlich, whose site-specific work has revolved around building multidimensional awareness into the use of space, the importance of the body as instrument for perceiving and analyzing the site comes into focus. Lea claims to sense not only people's energies on sites but uses a certain language while making her analysis. Vividly, she describes how she is able to connect her body to the energy around, also "with the birds and the sounds and with the vibration of the site" (Lanfranco 2008, p. 147). Her language use is painting with frequent metaphors that gives a very personal insight of how she relates to and analyses the site. For Lea, time is also an important factor. If she is in a hurry it will make it more difficult to process and put together the experiences of the site, risking to become too specialized in the analysis (ibid.).

Another site-worker interviewed by Lanfranco, a professional pendulum dowser named Dean Perry, is also emphasizing the importance of taking one's time while performing his analysis and he uses dowsing rods along with his body when analyzing the site. His method provides him with a lot of information about the site, such as spiritual residue left from other people, and with the help of the dowsing pendulum he claims also to be able to locate chemicals in the soil, which he believes should be decontaminated as they will otherwise affect the energy in the ground as well as the people who come there.

Lanfranco further describes how Dean senses a negative energy on the site which he wants to divide into several categories, pointing towards pollution from industrial sources and metals such as mercury and nickel. He makes a further distinction in his analysis claiming that there is also another type of negative energy - "a strong negative people energy that seemed to stretch back over the whole of the century" (Lanfranco 2008, p. 155) and claims that the site would benefit from a ritual to cleanse and clear the negative energy, as well as allowing for some recognition of the site itself (ibid.).

Geomancy brings with it many thought-provoking ideas. That man would be responsible for the alleged psycho-spiritual residue left behind in places where she resides, and that places may be traumatized and in need of healing - can probably rock the whole worldview. As incorporated elements in design, Lanfranco believes it can undoubtedly lead to profound transformations and a new spiritual structure in society (2008).



Some dowsers use rods in their practice, here we see a dowser using a wooden hatch in his quest of trying to locate watercourses in the ground.

## Chapter 2. Intuition

This chapter aims to shed light on the role of intuition in the design process. Initially, examples are given on how its essence can be expressed in this context as well as its connection to creativity, followed by how intuition can be explained in a scientific way. Finally, a section on the possible backside of intuition in the design process is presented.

### Intuition in the context of design

According to Bryan Lawson, professor in Architecture and also a psychologist, “The Heureka moment” as it is often called, seems to be a highly recurring description of great creative moments. The concept originally stems from when Archimedes would have stepped out of the tub shouting “Heureka!” when he had suddenly realized how the physical law of lifting-power worked. Many other creative thinkers, scientists and artists testify that solutions to problems have come to them while they least expected it, or, for example, when waking up after a night's sleep, during insomnia or dowsing in front of a fire, under the influence of drugs or while just daydreaming (2005, pp. 147-148).

However, Lawson considers it important to point out that since most creative thinkers also work very hard, one should be careful not to be led away in a romantic notion of the creative leap into the unknown (ibid.).

According to the general consensus, the creative process can be divided into five steps; first insight, preparation, incubation, illumination and verification (Lawson 2005).

**First insight** involves focusing on identifying the problem itself and making a commitment to solve it.

**Preparation** involves considerable conscious effort to find a solution to the problem. This step may fluctuate back to the first as new ideas and formulations arise, but is characteristically the most intense and hard part of the process.

**Incubation** follows and is a more relaxed step and suggests that the designer rests the mind on the specific problem and work on something else in the meantime.

**Illumination** is synonymous to the Heureka moment and no one know exactly how it can be explained. Although some argue that the mind continues to work in terms of re-organizing and re-establishing all of the data that was absorbed in earlier steps.

**Verification** is the final step where the designer needs to verify the solution through testing, elaborating and developing.

The creative process is rarely linear or can even really be seen as separate parts - often the designer is forced to jump back and forth between the “steps”. In the process one may come to a dead end which leads to the realization that a new problem formulation needs to be developed etc. (ibid).



Incubation might lead to illumination? In the creative process, lots of information pass between the conscious and unconscious in a continuous re-organization. Intuitive impulse might express itself in any of the stages of Lawson's model and is here pictured as the moon – which is often associated with the unconscious as well as with intuition.

## Intuition does not come to an unprepared mind

Rolf Johansson, professor in architecture, has been interested in the concept of intuition and in an article in the Nordic Journal of architectural research, he discusses the two concepts of abduction and intuition and looks more closely at intuition, if and how it can be related to abduction, a term mostly used in scientific work. Johansson here describes how the process of design can be similarized to the principle of abduction:

“Abduction is the solving of a mystery through the means of a conclusion about a possible outcome based on incomplete facts” (Johansson 2000, p. 18)

Johansson illustrates this through an example taken from Voltaire's novel *Zadig*, where a young man named Zadig is accused of stealing the Queen's dog. Zadig is out walking in the woods and is completely unaware that the Queen's dog is gone, however, he notes traces in the ground and draws an abductive conclusion, considering the traces and based on his own personal experience - that it is probably a small dog with long ears and that it is moreover a bitch who has recently had puppies, that made the traces. When the Queen's guards catch him shortly thereafter and wonder if he has seen the Queen's dog, he answers what he just thought. He thus becomes the main suspect for theft of the dog, because how could he know all these

details about it? Zaidig's reasoning came from a linking of all the details he saw during the walk, and based on his experience with dogs, he came to this "conclusion" as it intuitively popped up as a possible solution to the problem in his mind (Johansson 2000, p.14).

In terms of the creative process of design, Johansson states that this abductive reasoning can be applied as it is synthesizing and gives something new in qualitative terms. In regards to our image of the past, our understanding of the now or when it comes to the designing of future possibilities. Intuition plays a role here as it activates an idea that we are unable to express yet able to use in the given moment. It's like we make a choice without the knowing about *why* it is a good choice (Johansson 2000, p. 18).

According to Lawson, the process as well as the very understanding of design is mostly subjectively governed, as it is based on our particular backgrounds and can therefore lead to a narrow and restricted view on our design (Lawson 2005, p. 31) Furthermore he believes that designers develop certain ideas about how they want to design and the reasons for it, which can add to the idea that the designer's own motivations, reasons for wanting to design, values, sets of beliefs and attitudes will have a considerable impact on the creative process and the outcome (Lawson 2005, p. 159).

Johansson believes that artistic work alternates between synthesis and analysis, where the actual design is abduction and synthesis the final form. Intuition adds to the new by leading the designer to make a "guess" - if the designer is knowledgeable, it will be a qualified guess - because we intuitively choose what we consider important (Johansson 2000, p. 13,18).

## The backside on intuition

Kathryn Moore, professor in architecture at Birmingham City University, looks down a bit on intuition in the design process, as she thinks it is placed on a pedestal in many theories of creativity, "... *the long-cherished idea of intuition, the sacred cow so central to many theories of creativity. Intuition apparently occurs in those magic moments when access is gained through the subconscious and we allow our instincts to inform our actions.*" (Moore 2010, pp. 162-163).

She questions intuition in the way it is being approached in today's design supervision, as it risks not adding anything new to the design process itself, but in fact it could, in the worst scenario, lead us back to habitual thinking rather than insights of a more universal nature. Instead one should not only be encouraged to repeatedly challenge how one thinks, always

trying to find a new angle on the problem and in this way pushing the parameters of one's own aspirations. For Moore, intuition exists, but she emphasizes that it should not be equated as an "subconscious fix" but rather something based on knowledge, experience and reflection (ibid.)

Moore, however, encourages the intuitive and subjective side of the designer, but is merely critical to how we emphasize collecting data about the site instead of developing and conceptualize ideas to work with (Moore 2010). To stimulate intuition, sketching can be an aid to the designer. Kathryn Moore refers to studies showing that the act of drawing is a designer's pathway to enhanced visual skills as well as to intuition, because it accesses the right part of the brain. The activity helps to activate it, thus helping the designer not only to become more aware of her subconscious but also her intuitive responses, which are thought to be intertwined (Moore 2010, p. 40). The use of a computer could not accomplish the same stimuli for the brain as the act of pulling a pencil across the grain of the paper. Moore, however, is not convinced that sketching itself should be seen as a medium that helps us understand places and become better landscape architects, as she believes that in the teaching of design, drawing is disassociated from language and intelligence, in other words it can prevent critical, intelligent discussions (ibid).



## Chapter 3 - Interviews with architects

This chapter briefly presents the interviewed architects and in the following sections I make a narrative analysis where I write out the first name of the architect and refer to myself as my initials *AMP*. The outline of this chapter is as follows:

- 3.1 Interviewed architects
- 3.2 Site analysis
- 3.3 Genius loci
- 3.4 Intuition

### 3.1 Interviewed architects

Below the interviewed architects are displayed in chronological order:



#### **Thorbjörn Andersson**

Landscape Architect at Sweco -

Assignment Manager

Professor in Landscape Architecture

Graduated in 1981 at SLU, Alnarp

Renowned in the field, both nationally and internationally

Winner of the Siena prize





**Andrea Eneroth**

Landscape Architect at Archus - Assignment Manager

Graduated in 2006, University of Gloucestershire,  
England

About 12-13 years of experience



**Bengt Isling**

Landscape Architect at Nyréns -  
Assignment Manager

Graduated in 1979

Renowned in the field, both nationally and  
internationally

Winner of the Siena prize several times





**Rolf Johansson**

Architect and Professor Emeritus/ Affiliated to the Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).

Docent degree in Architecture – Design Methodology at KTH.

Graduated in 1976, University degree in Architecture, School of Architecture, KTH  
Experience as an architect 20 years of active practice

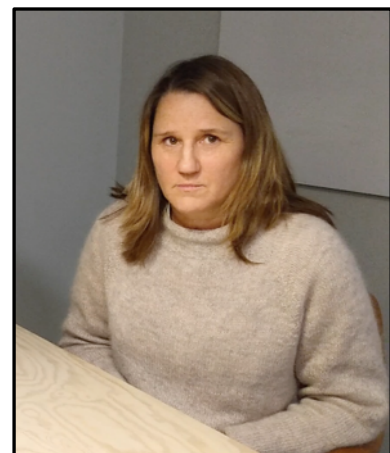


**Ingalill Nahrngbauer**

Landscape Architect at Archus - Assignment Manager

Graduated in 1987 at SLU, Alnarp

About 20 years of experience





### **Ulf Nordfjell**

Landscape Architect Ramböll, Senior consultant

Assignment Manager

Graduated in 1979 at SLU, Alnarp.

Renowned in the field, both nationally and internationally

Chelsea Flower show; Gold medal several times

Nominated for the Siena prize several times

## 3.2 – Site analysis

In this section, I focus on highlighting the parts of the material that can be linked to the site analysis. After reading the interviews over and over again, focusing on capturing statements about site analysis, a certain pattern emerged that gave the following themes to the narrative analysis below:

- The visit
- The analysis
- Perspectives on the site

At last, some key aspects of the section are summarized in a list. For the sake of readability, the quotes have been edited.

### The visit

In all interviews, none of the interviewees themselves spontaneously highlighted the site visit as an important component of the work process. Still, a prominent pattern was that visiting the site was considered important, after I had asked a leading question about it. It was clear then, that it was the absolutely preferred step in creating good conditions for understanding the site, but that the landscape architect sometimes does not have the benefit of going there, due to factors like time pressure, distance to the site or where and when in the project you come in. The type of project as well as the role one has in it are thus quite decisive factors when it

comes to how the architect relates to the site analysis, as well as even to the site visit. In case a site visit was not made, some of the architects admitted that this could lead to a lack of understanding of the site. As a substitute, Google maps was generally highlighted as a good tool.

AMP: Do you get out there and have a look on the site?

Ingalill: Yes, that's something I think that you should always do, sometimes the timeline is very short so you have to like, try to make a sketch! Because often these plans... with the local plans it can be that you are just thrown into the project at a certain stage and internally we get a demand like, "Could you help us bring forth a sketch on this courtyard?" And right after, there should be some illustration too, and then this project grows and then you think like oh! I should have gone out there and looked at the place, but it is not always you know about that. But in the best of worlds - first you get the basic map, local plans, so you have... can print a drawing, look at Google maps so that you have the aerial view, and then you go out to the place, and then ...like, you can do a lot at home as well because it's so good now with Google maps that we did not have before. When I started working, then you *really* had to go out. You can dabble with that nowadays, but like, it does not at all give the same as being on the site, that's what you absolutely should do.

It is clear that most of the site analysis is done a lot on the basis of quantifiable data, previous investigations, and local plans. According to Ingalill, at least one planning architect in the early stages has accompanied in the site analysis, but it is not clear what type of analysis. Since many projects are vast and contain several steps, a natural consequence could be that not everyone involved has the advantage of visiting the site. Then what risks may be entailed in not visiting the site?

AMP: What is it that doesn't, what is it that falls away do you think? Or what is it that...

Ingalill: Yes, but there's a lot... The feeling of the place, it is difficult to get just by looking at a map, it's obvious that you can see a lot, you can see how it is situated in the city so that you very quickly may... get a picture about it, or if you only... or if you go to the place

maybe, and it's a place where you haven't been, like if it's a new city, then you do not have the local knowledge to put into the picture of the place.

From this it is clear that how well you know the place beforehand plays a role in how you relate to it, even during the site-visit itself. Also in this statement, the feeling of the place is mentioned, something that Ingalill is alone in commenting on in both the statements concerning the site analysis and the site visit. Inevitably, this leads to consequential questions about what impact it might have, if the feeling of the place is not experienced by everyone involved in the project, as well as what the feeling of the place means and what value it implies to the project as well as to the site? I discuss this further in the next section on genius loci, as it turned out to be related to this in many ways.

Rolf was the only architect who maintained that it is important to return to the site several times, as there are often details to be missed.

AMP: Yeah, I see. Does it mean that you may have to go back to the site?

Rolf: Yes, I definitely think so! Back and forth. And there's so much you miss, it's common, so you always miss something, especially if you work with details. Let's say that there's a small balustrade to be made child-safe. And you go there and measure and stuff, but you always find that, aha, if I connect this balustrade to the wall - what is the distance there? I didn't notice that, you have to return again and again and again. And it is also on a larger scale. There is always something that you overlook, or well, something that you come up with is important that you didn't think was important.

AMP: No exactly, and it often happens only afterwards...

Rolf: It happens when you start looking for a solution

AMP: Yes...

Rolf: Then you see what's important.

The site visit can also be complemented with today's technology, and with 3D-modeling according to Ulf, which is often used in the office today.

Ulf: Well, but I think that's just exactly the way you think, that you walk around in a 3D model. As you can do here in the office, we have entire movie studios that make 3D models, you can walk around and watch etc...

## The analysis

Most architects said that they start from the place itself in the work process and analysis, that it is important to understand the site by its conditions, background and history. The overall impression from the survey is that in practice there also seems to be a great focus on analyzing the site using maps, Google maps, past investigations and 3D-visualizations. Even though most architects emphasized starting from the site in their work, there are different approaches to the statement "starting from the site". A site analysis model that is based on knowledge of natural geography and geology is something that Bengt emphasizes, a kind of model he has developed himself through experience and now uses in his analysis on the site:

Bengt: I have a very... in my opinion, good analytical model in my head, and it is very much based on natural geography, geology and where it grows and such. I may not look that carefully, you may find something that is very important, some detail but the important thing is to see, in that case when there is the rocky ground, where is the moraine ending, what slopes are there, where is the evening sun and where are the views?

Topography... This with the vegetation, always in the central parts of Sweden, it looks the same...

The geographical facts about a place are thus important aspects of the site analysis, also emphasizing where one is in relation to the high coastline. One view, shared by both Ulf and Ingalill, was that if a landscape architect is to be able to do something relevant on a site, an understanding of the site's conditions, its background and history is needed. Instead of working with concepts, they argue it is more important to start from the site itself.

Ingalill: I'm not a fan of looking at a concept like, "now we're going to make a Japanese garden out of this no matter what it looks like" but then it should be something that *makes* me think a Japanese garden is the right design as well. Ehm ... no, it is very important to look at what are the problems in this place and what are the... as well as what are the valuable things that one must guard so that they do not ... so that they are taken care of or maybe developed so... and it could be existing vegetation or it could be like, sunny or bare locations, not to build them away and add a... bicycle house in the best place or...

Another way of promoting the conditions of the site:

Ulf: So I usually say that the conditions of the place, and its background and history, the only way to be able to make something relevant in a place, is to understand its history and background. If you can't get your mind around that, it doesn't matter that you even try.

### Perspectives on the site

An interesting aspect that came up several times during the interviews was that the place was referred to as "an empty area", as "blank", or "sometimes there is nothing" (Ulf, Ingalill, Andrea). By concluding this, more focus was added on the surroundings and other factors to create a perception of the site and its analysis. How one talks about the site itself shows something about the relationship to it and how one, as a designer, looks at it based on their perception of reality. This suggests a visually oriented perspective on places, which doesn't give much space to a more experience-based analysis. It may be that when the site is perceived as empty or blank, the examination of the feeling on the site becomes less important. In this sense, the interpretation of the genius loci is affected, which is discussed in the next section.

Ulf: It is the same with reality, you walk around there too and snoop around and look... unfortunately, today usually the environments that you come to... it's just ... an empty area! It's a demolition... well, there's nothing! To start from, but then it is rather the context, of what is around the place, etc. If let's say, a block is to be built in Uppsala or somewhere else, so then we are more curious about what is going on around, because the place - it is usually blank!

Andrea also talks about the site itself based on what is there, and depending on the elements that build it:

Andrea: Yes... But if you think of the soul of the place, then you should have a place, I think, then there must be a place. Unlike a field then... well, it is a place but then it is like this... so then it is either something you want to create or preserve.



The cultural context of the site could in some cases be a strong contributing element to how the designer had to relate to the site. A telling example of this is the Sami culture that exists in the North of Sweden, where the importance of showing respect to the site's history and cultural context is simply what is expected of the designer. This actually became evident to Thorbjörn at one time when he was about to start a new project in Gällivare.

Thorbjörn: It's a very sensitive matter in Gällivare with the Sàpmi culture for example,

AMP: Ah yes, I see! Is it something you can feel when you're there?

Thorbjörn: Yes, it is.

AMP: When you're out...

Thorbjörn: Well, they look you in the eyes and say that up here everyone has a little Sami blood in them, they say.

AMP: Mmm...

Thorbjörn: And I'm like oh dear, how are we going to handle this, like, here am I, coming from Skåne.

AMP: Yeah, hahahah...

Thorbjörn: Like, how am I supposed to manage this?

## Site analysis; key aspects

What was being said relating to the site analysis focusing on the methods is presented below as a summarized list:

- Landscape model - analyzing the site based on basic facts about its geology, geography and relation to the highest coastline
- The history and background of the site - to analyze and create an understanding based on this
- Perception of site as “empty”/ “blank”/ “sometimes there's nothing”
- What valuable things exist that you need to guard - soft values, sunny locations

### **Other factors considered to influence the analysis and perception of the site:**

- The architect's previous relationship with the site
- The cultural context of the place - affects the expectation of how the place is perceived

### 3.3 – Genius loci

In this section, I focus on highlighting the parts of the material that can be linked to the genius loci and at last, key aspects are summarized in a list. In the interviews, several comments about the genius loci emerged. After reading through the empirical material many times, focusing on capturing what was said both directly and indirectly about the concept, the following themes were picked out:

- **Genius loci as the conditions and possibilities of the place**
- **A larger perspective than site**
- **Personal applications**
- **Factors that affect the genius loci**

My overall view is that the genius loci as a concept is used quite extensively as a key word in the work process. Only one of the architects spontaneously addressed the genius loci during the interview (Ulf), i.e. it seemed as a central aspect in his inner conceptual world as he searched for words describing his work process. Andrea was the only architect who had not heard about the term before, and she also was alone in relating it to the actual experience of the site (which is highlighted under *Personal applications*). As for the other architects they emphasized the genius loci as an important concept to relate to. Comments such as "That is something I've been thinking about!" (Bengt) or "Yes *that* ... is something like a mantra that you have ..." (Ingalill) and "the genius loci is absolutely central. That's where you have the keys, as I see it" (Thorbjörn). Therefore, the concept was something that most architects believed they addressed in their work process, but, as it turned out, in very different ways. Some associated to Norberg-Schulz and the perceived identity of the place, and this the longer work experience they had. A greater difficulty, however, lay in finding a more practical definition.

## Genius loci as the conditions and possibilities of the site

Several of the architects believed that the genius loci summarizes the conditions of a site, and that the concept may also be seen as a method for describing its conditions and/ or possibilities (Bengt). Ulf emphasizes that the concept also includes the site's background and history, and that it is absolutely necessary for the landscape architect to understand this. According to Thorbjörn, the concept of genius loci gives the whole context of the place, it is the main key to the mastering of the profession itself, which he thinks is difficult "and the most important key, I think is the spirit of the place" (Thorbjörn). He emphasizes the genius loci as a way of understanding the site itself from a more holistic perspective.

Thorbjörn: It can be a virgin place too, you have to understand... The practice, you have to understand what you can see with your eyes but also what you can't see with your eyes. You have to understand the memories, traditions and how it has been used at some time and you have to understand what it looks like during different seasons, what it looks like when the wind blows, when it is quiet, when it rains and what is needed then!

AMP: Mmm

Thorbjörn: One must understand the context, so the genius loci is absolutely central.

Rolf, the only one of the interviewees who is a house architect, also thinks that he may have started out from the concept of genius loci in his work, in the way of focusing on the characteristics on the site and trying to highlight these with reference to how he interprets Norberg-Schulz. His answer when given the question about whether relating to the genius loci in his work:

Rolf: Yes a little! But in a way that we might call it more like, contextualism - as in architecture then. That is to say paying close attention to what is special and unique about the place. Not to seek universal, general solutions, but to gain something that is related to what is already there. So in that sense... maybe!

....

## A larger perspective than site

Both Ulf and Ingalill point out that the genius loci does not need or even should be concentrated only to the site itself, but that it can be linked to a larger zoom out, such as a city or an entire landscape.

Ulf: The site gets so tight, often it's only in that specific area where you are going to build something, but for me it is, it can be a whole city, or a whole landscape or whatever it is... for me it is so much more than just the actual site that you work with.

The conditions of the site are, as stated in the previous section, often equated with the concept of genius loci and can sometimes depend on what is around, thus putting everything into a larger context. Being prepared to broaden the understanding of the very concept of genius loci is seen as necessary, as it may depend on factors such as the type of project, vegetation, views, function and sense of the place.

Ingalill: Yes and that's what makes... and it's not just this square meter plot, but it's how the plot is in relation to other things that are around or about where you are in the city, or in the landscape ... so you have to, you must, like, see the place ... maybe several miles away and not just stare at this little spot. Really. Both look and how, how does it feel on the site when I look out from it and what am I looking at and... what is the scale of the landscape or what is the character of the city or this district or ... Yes, or it should have, it should have a function as well, so it is exciting to get the function together with something that feels obvious and beautiful or something...

Practical elements such as the vegetation on site also makes an influence on the genius loci.

Ingalill: Yes, this with the genius loci it is here also ... It is after all... what kind of vegetation, if we look at that, which plants thrive in this place? What are the climate conditions, what is it that ... there is no use in proposing anything that will die anyway.

The basic intent of the landscape architect ought to be to create and/ or do something on a site, which is why its conditions, background and history are seen as obvious ingredients in understanding the place. The risk with this perspective however, having a constant focus on

adding something, can lead to not assuming what the site itself actually has and thus overlook its genius.

## Personal applications

Genius loci seems to be something that you easily personalize and make your own, i.e. depending on who you are, it has a unique meaning. Being a concept with its origin in Roman religion and later verified in architectural history and theory, representing something rather abstract and fluid, it's not a foreign idea that the concept would have such an application. According to Ulf, the genius loci is a personally colored approach on how you work as a landscape architect. He believes that in the profession we should use materials that can be produced in Sweden, but that unfortunately, very cheap ones are sometimes imported from Asian countries or China. He thinks this is completely contrary to the genius loci of the place and also to the concept of sustainability:

Ulf: ... it is absolutely insane, it is like the utmost concretization of sustainability and genius loci that you, for crying out loud, should not import from the third world.

In one of the interviews, the concept was associated with something hazy and/or supernatural, while the interviewee stated that he did not believe in either curvy lines or feng shui (Bengt). On the other hand, the fact that the place may have some kind of soul, was still something he confirmed to believe:

Bengt: However, I believe that the place can still have some kind of a soul, but that you can interpret it more literally.

AMP: Mmm

Bengt: That there are things that fit better or worse in different places and such...

Andrea had previously not heard of the term genius loci, but she associated the soul of the place with its soft values and with its experience. She emphasized large trees as one of the most soul-creating things on a site and believes that the landscape architect is a fighter for the soft values in the projects as well as of what she thought to be the soul of the place. She thinks this is important to remember as she has experienced how these things are "forgotten" and unfortunately sometimes a little downplayed by the other occupational groups involved, for example the house architects.

Andrea: But that's how it goes, like, when as a landscape architect you become a fighter for, for the soft values, for the soul, because it's like there's nobody else who sees it, the architect can be like this "oh look at the facade!" But it's not a soul, it's just a smooth surface. There's no soul in there, the soul is like, the experience. And I think that a facade, you experience it like this (snapping her fingers) but sitting under a big tree, it's like ... it lasts. So ... eh ... that's what I'm thinking of.

### Factors affecting the genius loci in practice

Most interviewees believed that time was a decisive factor for the genius loci, in other words, it is seen as something changeable. That there are different memory layers in the place depending on what has happened there over the years, was considered obvious for Thorbjörn. However, this could entail some difficulties in the choice of design since some believe that all times should be allowed to speak, but that this can be difficult to figure out for the intended site.

Thorbjörn: ... and I think that the genius loci, that's all the things that have happened all along, huh, so to speak ... Eh, then it can be more or less contrived to use things that happened a thousand years ago, so ... or not. Working with metaphors is a fairly easy way to create a physical environment. Like, here it has been a... a marina... has been here once in a while so I will have a marine theme in my park. Or whatever it is, that, it can be good, but it can also be a little corny, it can be a little Disneyland like that. So you have to edit in this - Everything you can get. But I think it is all times, you often see those who work with restorations, for example, they say that all times must be allowed to speak. If you restore a historic park e.g. So it may not be until 1768 that we will be renovating, but there may be something from both before and after it, so to speak, so that we can understand the depth of time.

Speaking of time and memory-layers on site, Bengt had a peculiar experience concerning the genius loci. Two years after finishing working with the project Hornsbergs strandpark in Stockholm, he came across a historical map from the 18th century showing the area of the park. The map conveyed some design elements that really amazed him.

Bengt: ...but then it turned out that there was a farm here called Hornsberg's farm, it was lying here somewhere, here maybe! Or how was it now... somewhere here and they had ... there was a garden that lay here that was pretty strict, that had a parterre too. In this section...

AMP: Okay!

B: And then there is a historical map showing what the coast looked like, though it was here (showing on a piece of paper)! It looked something like that, on that map. Exactly the same division into strict and organic as well. And here it was kind of ... it was often like that in those parks then, both Italian and French parts and there is also forest, contrasting with the strictness then, a hunting park like, it was here! Just the same! You look and you just waffle! We saw that two years after it was built, so maybe it was genius loci then. It wanted to become like that.

....

According to Ingalill, one factor that is believed to affect the genius loci may be the entire work process and the ultimate choice of design. When the team itself helps to create the design of the site, it is important to be responsive and communicative, "It can be so that you yourself ... as well as ... join and create that feeling together with the architect" (Ingalill). Another factor could be if a citizen dialogue was made at an earlier stage, or if there is already a local plan active when you are involved in the project yourself. Ingalill believes that this can lead to a limited opportunity to influence the design and to interpret the genius loci, since decisions related to this have already been made at earlier stages:

Ingalill: Yes, sometimes it gets... I think about when you are in town, often there are wishes or requirements from the municipality or maybe the local plan about that it should be certain, a certain number of floors for it to work out with surrounding neighborhoods or it should have some window sills or what do I know, there are things that are controlled in the local plan and then it is already ... decided on.

To approach and understand the genius loci on the basis of the site's history and other facts, Ulf considers to be a major reason for the success of the whole project, as well as helping to

convince. It signals respect and consideration to the client if the landscape architect is introduced to the site from as many different perspectives as possible.

Ulf: When we started out with development plans, it was actually the genius loci that was the driving point, we thought everything was so artificial and like, conceptual make-it-up-solutions as I called it in the 80's and 90's. But when we started collecting historical documents and facts and tried to understand *why* it looked the way it did, before we started drawing, we got everyone with us.

### Genius loci; key aspects

What was said about the term genius loci is summarized in the list below, where the genius loci is described as:

- The conditions of a place
- A method for describing the conditions and / or possibilities of the site
- Includes site background and history
- The whole context of the place - a key to the profession
- All things that have happened on the site all the time - "all times must be allowed to speak"
- A personally colored approach to the profession
- Something changeable
- Represents the site's soft values - the on-site experience that affects one in depth.
- A greater zoom out - can be a whole city or a whole landscape



## 3.4 - Intuition

This section presents the parts of the empirical material that can be linked to intuition and its role in the design process. The intuition was taken up in many different ways by all the interviewees. After reading through the empirical material several times, two main themes could be picked out:

- **Intuition in relation to the design process.**
- **The dangers of intuition**

As a last step the key aspects of this section are summarized in a list.

### Intuition in relation to the design process

Most of the architects speak of intuition as something that provides the initial inspiration and vision to the work. Thus, in its nature, it's derived from something positive and "enlightening" to one's process, and may be what sets the mark on the entire project. It is also referred to as a combination of accumulated experience and knowledge, or simply an ability to mobilize the right things at the right time. During the interviews, two architects mentioned intuition without asking while describing their work process; "But you ask me how I think and I do that very intuitively because I've done it so many times" (Bengt) and "it comes like, intuitively" (Thorbjörn). Several architects also talked about intuition as "going on feeling", but mentioned it in slightly different parts of the work process. However, whether called intuition or "going on feeling", it seems to happen while searching for something new – i.e. it's something the architect does with the intention to create/ solve/ experience something. Bengt's way of intuitively trying to get an idea of a place seems to be disturbed if he, at the same time, has to pay attention about too many facts. It is the creative experience of the site that he wants to be able to focus on, which correlates to his intuitive approach:

Bengt: I am both intuitive and... intuitive, yes that would be to.... Intuitively, I don't need to analyze every damn shrub and blueberry rice and such... because it's not really my role. It is great that others do that, it's not that I look down on that knowledge but there are so many facts to be processed as well as it is for me, it's at least a matter of

intuition that you don't have to... do it, but you can go for the feeling instead, and... try to experience something.

The claim that there's a link between intuition and the genius loci is made by two of the architects (Rolf and Thorbjörn), who believe that intuition can help define the elusive genius loci. Thorbjörn thinks that the understanding of the soul of the place comes intuitively, while Rolf points out that it is about the experience - the question here is what causes the other. An understanding can possibly be obtained without an experience, but without the experience perhaps the understanding will lack something essential that only the experience itself can provide?

Thorbjörn: To understand the spirit of the place, it is like, there... So in some way we are different to an artist, whom is to start out with a white surface so to speak, like, now I have to come up with something, it can be anything, it comes intuitively.

Rolf's thought on the connection between intuition and genius loci:

Rolf: So intuition can help us to access the genius loci because it is something very difficult to grasp. It is about experience, it is an experience and what Norberg-Schulz tries to access is that it is some kind of shared experience, some kind of shared experience which can be understood by everyone, he tries to find ... in his book he has the example of different cities, he tries to characterize a certain city in a way everyone can recognize. That everyone can say yes, *that's* what makes the identity of this place.

Thorbjörn does not believe landscape architects work as much intuitively as an artist. "Landscape architects work after all... sometimes intuitively but less than artists do". He points out that landscape architects "should work with ideas" and believes that landscape architecture is also based on other factors than intuition, i.e. many more material aspects, which need to be weighed towards on another to achieve good results. However, he thinks that intuition helps to give the feeling and the "espri" to the design:

Thorbjörn: But sometimes I can feel that it feels too analytical, it feels like too dry, it feels like, it is well done and good maybe, but it does not feel... it does not sing, it lacks this "espri" to it.

AMP: Yes

Thorbjörn: Now I'm just trying to do it based on my intuition

Rolf further believes that intuition is not something we can get away from in the creative process, as there's an infinite number of possibilities when looking for the solution to an architectural problem. Ultimately, it is about choosing one of these possibilities and this choice is influenced by one's intuition. "There is something that leads you in some direction... You cannot escape from the fact that the intuitive has, or is this leap, from... from what you know so far, to what is possible!" (Rolf) He further states that intuition can be attributed to the experience, but that the two cannot be equated since intuition logically can't be said to be a conscious cause to a particular choice that one makes:

Rolf: ...it is the skills knowledge, it is a combination of skills knowledge and confidence knowledge. That is, to have so much experience that you can mobilize the right things. And experience and intuition are a little coherent, it's just that when we say intuition we don't really know what experiences, we can't say that it depends on *that* specifically. But that it depends on something is still probable.

For Ingalill, intuition in the work process is something she is somewhat uncertain about and finds difficult to define "No, but I follow the intuition, or I think I follow intuition" (Ingalill). Instead, she points out past experiences and visual references as a source of help in the work process, and believes that the intuitive part can come in at a later stage when you have cleared the more basic aspects, "there are a lot of such intuitive things that still remain, which you can feel or you can feel" (Ingalill). She talks a lot about "to go on feeling" and about creating a certain feeling when she works, but thinks there is no hindsight to this:

Ingalill: Yes, but you do not figure out things like it's math, that there's a rule book and so you follow it and get something done without ... you follow your feeling .... you want to create a sense of security or a sense of welcoming or that this company gets an entrance, or the hotel gets an entrance that is inviting, or has some kind of image.

## The dangers of intuition

Andrea's view on intuition in the work process is linked to the first spontaneous incidents and to the inspiration that arises in a new project:

Andrea: So I'm always just like that, like, I think ... I probably *think* like too much, my intuition is always a bit like, "oh my god this is so much fun"!!!

She thinks that intuition in this way can cause problems as it can take quite a while to structure everything that comes to her in the form of ideas and inspiration, but that even this can be seen as a kind of skill that comes with experience. It can also be about timing, about being able to do the right things at the right time in a project and she believes that intuition in that aspect can involve some risks:

Andrea: Yes, but I want to draw and sketch and stuff like that, and that may not be what makes a good project. That I think it's fun hahaha! That's not a disadvantage but yes, I think you sometimes have to take a few steps back, and ask yourself, what can I do more? That is, I get turned on by some things but if you say, hey wait now, how can I lift this? *that* is not intuition but then you have to start thinking ice cold as well. So, I think you can be a little misled by intuition.

Ulf also refers intuition to the inspiring visions and ideas at the beginning of a project. He thinks that intuition is an important foundation that must be respected and that it can be developed through practice, but thinks it is important to point out that ideas do not come easily.

Ulf: I think that intuition is *incredibly* essential, and I also think that intuition is something that you can acquire, i.e. that you develop etc. It's not that you just, just as you shouldn't think that ideas...they grow during a painful process, it's not like there is some hatch in the roof that opens and then there comes an angel down talking to you, that's not how it works.

He also sees computers as "an incredibly laborious process" and a limitation to intuition as well as to the work process at an early stage. Instead, he emphasizes sketching as the best tool

to work with your intuition, along with experience. The ability to listen to one's colleagues Ingalill believes can be a key to intuition in the work process, especially if you do not have so much experience.

Ingalill: You have to learn, it is important to listen to others and to really listen to them, and maybe that's what you get that intuition from, that ... it is experience that listening to people, about what they think and what they want.

The art of listening and taking into account the opinions of others and not just their own intuition is also something that Thorbjörn considers important; "you can't be inside your own bubble either". Today, he thinks that there are often citizen dialogues where you have to show humility towards future wishes and comments, so a danger with the intuition here can be "with the social sustainability and so that in some way you still have to listen to what people want" (Thorbjörn). It is considered part of the process to show the public how one has thought and also to be open to their views on the project.

## Intuition; key aspects

Intuition in the context of the design process:

Comes in the initial stages - gives inspiration and pleasure to the work

Is the emotion and the ideas that come at the beginning of the creative process

Gets disturbed when dealing with too many facts at the same time

Can help access the genius loci

Cannot be ruled out

Is proficiency and confidence - the ability to mobilize the right things

Comes at a later stage when the basic aspects are clarified

Is to "go on the feeling"

Can be acquired and developed via sketching

Can be obtained from listening to colleagues

Is not thinking rationally

Must be respected and not be confused with hard work

Computers are bad for intuition

**The dangers of intuition:**

Time aspect: You can get stuck in the feeling and inspiration for a long time

Social sustainability - you can't just be in your bubble

## Chapter 4. The meeting of perspectives

The entrance of this work was a wanting to investigate what signifies site analysis in today's landscape architectural practice together with what role the concepts of genius loci and intuition play for professionals in the design process, as well as in regards to the site. The work also aimed to raise a different perspective in order to provoke the already established approach to site analysis.

### 4.1 Site analysis in today's practice

According to the results of the survey, what is said directly about the performance of the site analysis is characterized by "starting from the site" through methods such as landscape analysis with a focus on geology, geography and also the understanding of the context of site, in this case its history and background. The previous relationship to the site, together with the cultural context were raised in a few cases and affected the expectation of how the place is perceived. This is to some extent linked to Relph's theory in humanistic geography, where the relational and cultural context of the place are important, but with the distinction that Relph further links this to how the people connected to the place shape its meaning, rather than how the place is expected to be perceived (Relph 1987, p.141). In one of the interviews, however, the relational and cultural aspect were raised in a broader perspective, regarding how the Sami culture in the northern parts of Sweden affects how the architect approaches the site and its analysis. This also touches upon what was said about the concept of genius loci, discussed in the next section.

The site is also mentioned as "empty", or "blank", and in some cases the focus was given to what protective elements already exist on the site. Except in one case, the experience was not directly related to the site analysis. This may have several causes (which I also return to in the reflection on methodology), but when the above characteristics were stated as the predominant associative answer, it indicates that the practical application of site analysis is primarily based on more visual and technically oriented methods. A deficiency in this conclusion is the difficulty that exists when it comes to differentiating the totality of a method for site analysis - it emerged in the later processing of the material that even more abstract elements such as intuition, genius loci and, by indirection, the experience could be linked to the analysis of the site. The overall impression is that they came in at a later stage of the analysis.

If considering the place as a natural essence according to Norberg-Schulz's perspective, it is not the quantifiable data that give the place its meaning. It is the experience of the concrete things which directly affect the experience of life that contributes to the inherent meaning of the place. For example, both trees, buildings, seasons and emotions are considered as building blocks for our existential content, also shaping the understanding of the place as natural essence (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p. 6, 8).

If the site analysis setup would contain the experience of the site to control a little more before starting to analyze, i.e. if a conscious distinction between the experience and analysis was the norm, favoring neither of them, what would this imply? The intention of the landscape architect profession itself comes in here too, for, as architects, the prime intent ought to be to intervene and to create something on the site. The understanding of the site as phenomenon would thus have an impact on the design.

Prioritizing more analytical tools such as investigating geology, history and background are important and bring fundamental value to the analysis. Still, emphasizing what is embedded in the experience of the site at an early stage may deepen the understanding of it, or as one of the architects put it “you have to understand what you can see with your eyes, but also what you cannot see with your eyes”. The distinction between the different steps in the analysis is seen as an important insight here, and even so the timing of each step. An increased awareness of the site analysis as a whole, the meaning of its various parts and what the designer brings further from each step, would encourage a more comprehensive picture of the site as a whole.

## The role of genius loci

The term genius loci is used by most of the architects and, like with what signifies the site analysis, the concept was associated with the site's conditions, history and background. It was also considered a keyword for the conceptualization of the project, a personal approach to the profession, and in some cases linked to the "soft values" of the site. In one of the interviews, it was associated with something mysterious and/ or supernatural, with the addition that this was nothing the person believed in.

I cannot say that I managed to find out how the concept of genius loci is really applied in practice, but through the interviews I have gained more knowledge about how some architects talk about and emphasize how and in what ways they relate to the concept. I also discuss this further in the reflection on methodology section below.



Time seems to be an important factor in relation to the genius loci for most of the architects, in the sense that memory layers from past events leave their mark on the site, making its genius changeable. This contradicts Norberg-Schulz's view, where time is seen more as an external factor that can affect the place on a more superficial level. Still, it cannot reach and change its inherent soul in the same way (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p.18). I do believe the genius loci still can be said to reflect time with regards to the social structure of modern times, and in a secularized society like Sweden, there are probably certain limitations to what a term like the genius loci can adopt. Making a predominant connection with the conditions, background and history of the site is the seemingly only "sensible" use of the term.

Unlike Norberg-Schulz, who in his own work wanted to concretize the, ever since the Roman times, metaphysically oriented perspective on genius loci - landing in the proposal and belief that one should manage the ever-present spirit of place by dwelling and thus realizing its genius (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p.18, 23). Although the goal for him was to concretize, perhaps his conclusion was that it is impossible to deconstruct concepts and words with metaphysical associations without, for that matter, depriving the concept of its essential meaning.

Instead of associating the concept with the hazy and spiritual, this study shows that the focus can be placed upon the "soft values" or the experience of the site, which, as one of the architects pointed out, unfortunately often seems to be forgotten and/ or downplayed by other professional groups involved.

## The role of intuition

Regarding the role of intuition in the design process, it was present in the practice of all architects, mentioned as the initial inspiration, joy and pleasure in the project and it was also linked to abduction. Regarding a potential danger with intuition, social sustainability was highlighted and the potential risk of getting caught in your own bubble.

The intuitive input of the architects is similar to the creative process described by Lawson in the way that it's hard to define as something that follows a linear structure, and it can be derived from both the inexplicable *Heureka/* Illumination step in this model as well as to abductive reasoning (Lawson 2005, p. 150) (Johansson 2000, p. 18), i.e. the ability to mobilize the right knowledge and experience at the right time. The overall impression is that intuition needs to be balanced and refined together with the rest of the elements that materialize the work, and that the structural box of the work process sets the framework for

the conceptualization of intuition. In relation to the place, a link between intuition and genius loci could be revealed in the way that either of them seemed to exclude the other - as an instrument the intuition could then help to define the elusive genius loci as a pure intuitive impulse or through experience.

## 4.2 An unconventional perspective and approach to site

The purpose of the work was also to lift an unconventional perspective and approach to site, which the literature study gave examples of by illustrating feng shui, geomancy, and by describing the methods for analysis of two site workers (one bioenergetic counselor and one dowser). The account of the unconventional perspective illustrates how a different view of place as phenomenon also implies a specific analysis and consequently the design.

### Feng shui and Geomancy

A common denominator in the unconventional methods is how the less visible values of the site are given a high priority in both analysis and approach. In both geomantics and feng shui, the site is considered to be influenced by subtle earth-energies which also determine how the site should be designed. As a method of analysis, the difference between the traditional Roman geomancy and Chinese feng shui is seen to be the perceptual ability of the geomancer/ feng shui designer. The Roman geomancy also emphasized detecting psycho-spiritual residue in places, which is considered to affect the site's character and inherent qualities. It further states to believe that the site may be in a state of trauma, which also links it to past events on the site. The task of the geomancer is then to detect, restore and balance the site in order to make it suitable for a design intervention (Lanfranco 2008, p. 44.) According to the Chinese doctrine feng shui, it is rather the earthly and cosmic energy of the place that is emphasized in relation to it. Since these things are considered impossible for the human mind to understand, a special compass is used as an instrument for analyzing these aspects (Lanfranco 2008, p. 69).

### Lea and Dean

Looking at the site workers that were interviewed in the book "Site divine – an alternate method of site analysis" (Lanfranco 2008), Lea Erlich (bioenergetic counselor) och Dean Perry (dowser), they could obtain information about the site that assumed to be both quantitative and/ or qualitative. In analyzing the site, they both used their vision to identify

what characterized it in a concrete way. However, they seemed to emphasize analyzing the site with their sensory ability, which included the body and the feelings they got by perceiving/ experiencing the site out in field. How they experienced the site in different places within the area, ought to be the most distinguishing feature of their approach.

I believe an important note is that the intention behind their site analysis differs in the sense that it's not as design oriented as opposed to that of the landscape architect. It is rather the understanding of and foremost the experience about the site that is the goal here, and so the phenomenological perspective can become central, i.e. the first-person perspective, clearly emphasizing the conscious structures that arise in the directed experience (Phenomenology, 2003).

### 4.3 Reflection on methodology

This study is primarily an indicator of the current situation in the field. With the interviews being few, it is not representative to a larger target group. However, as several of the interviewed architects have achieved great success at both national and international levels, their statements give the work some weight. How significant it is up to the reader to decide.

The qualitative interview survey gave me a huge amount of material to process. To succeed in getting an overview of all the empirical material was at times a tough job, as well as being able to see and extract the sought after stuff and put everything into the right context. The fact that I transcribed and interpreted the empirical material myself involves some risk of selective perception, as well as that there are always things to be missed out. Not telling the architects in advance about what the interview would exactly touch on admitted some consequences. My hope was that this would generate a better raw material, and that the approach suited my subject – focusing on the concepts of intuition and genius loci, both elusive in nature. In some cases, my experience was that the interviewees were a little stressed by not really knowing what I was looking for. However, as stated in the method section, I always revealed it towards the end of the interview.

Whether or not this was a successful method I cannot prove, as I can't put it in relation to anything else. If I had done another study in which I did the opposite, i.e. informed the architects about the exact subject area for the questions prior to the interview and asking the questions in a chronological order, I would have been able to compare the results and in this way it is likely that I could have demonstrated the effect of this method.

A disadvantage of not doing a follow-up with new questions implies a weaker result as it would have given the results more weight and depth. When I worked on the material it became clear how certain concepts were related to each other, which would have been interesting to ask more direct sequential questions about, eg. how the architect himself thought that intuition linked to the *genius loci*, which only two of the architects spontaneously addressed. Direct follow-up questions on certain comments, for example about on what grounds the architect concluded the site as “blank” or “empty” would have been interesting to ask.

In the result, one of the conclusions regarding the site analysis was that the experience was not directly related to the site analysis, except in isolated cases. If I had asked more direct and leading questions about the importance of experience in regards to the site analysis, it might have given different answers and results. At the same time, I wanted to avoid asking leading questions as it was the first, spontaneous comment that, in my method, hoped to reproduce as unfiltered a picture as possible, a conclusion I made while researching the method and the qualitative interview in particular. It would also have been interesting to directly ask how the experience of the site affected the architects in their analysis, as well as what possible connections it would have had to intuition and *genius loci*.

In order to not affect myself too much before the interviews I also conducted the literature survey afterwards, which I retrospectively found to work well in the sense that the interviews could proceed without the influence of any theoretical reference. The empirical material also provided much more information and opened up to several exciting side tracks, which I long thought about how to treat. Because of the scope of the work, however, I had to set certain frameworks, but the empirical material also poses a potential to focus on a more work process-oriented aim. In this study I refer primarily to the Norberg-Schulz definition when looking at the concept of *genius loci*, but there are, of course, many other place theories in the field that could be discussed in accordance to the aim of this work.

The interviewed architects all had many years of work experience with a minimum of about 12 years. If I had interviewed people with shorter experience, it might have revealed other statements and/ or attitudes. At the same time, all of the interviewed architects had the role of being an assignment manager, which a recent graduate rarely becomes at once. This leads to more influence throughout the project and probably affects interpretation as well as the implementation of the mentioned concepts.

If I had made a quantitative addition to the work, for example a statistical survey, this would certainly have given an increased reliability to the results, but I had to limit myself in relation to the time frame of the course and chose to emphasize the methods of the qualitative interview and narrative analysis.

The practical applications of the given concepts are difficult to demonstrate solely by the chosen methods, but attitudes and language use can definitely be explored through conversations, something Brinkmann and Kvale argue and also describe as the basic way of human interaction (Brinkmann, Kvale, p. 15). To be able to reach even deeper and see how the site analysis really is carried out in practice, one possibility would have been to make another arrangement where I could have interviewed the architect on site, during the actual execution of the analysis. The advantage of this would have been to be able to directly follow the designer in his performance on the spot, which is a step closer to real practice than to talk about it in the office.

The fact that I completed the work on my own also constitutes a source of error. I have consciously tried to have a critical approach to my interpretations during the interviews and towards the empirical material, but to be completely objective as a researcher is almost impossible - of course I have my personal perception filter which gives its biases. Collaboration, i.e. not doing all the work myself would probably also have provided a greater reliability, as well as increasing the representativeness of the work.

#### 4.4 Turning towards the last question and further research

All in all, it was extremely interesting to find out about the different perspectives during the interviews regarding the place and its analysis, genius loci and intuition. The work has, through a qualitative interview survey, demonstrated certain attitudes to the concepts and indications of their implementation. The real application of the concepts is something to explore and discuss further.

Regarding the purpose of provoking conventional, established methods with some alternate ways, this was not formed with the intention of stating whether something is right or wrong, but rather aimed at demonstrating different ways of thinking in relation to place and how landscape architects can take in and reflect upon the information that the unconventional methods imply.

To answer the last question of whether the implications of the answers of the two first questions should be expanded or not, I suggest we examine our outlook on site as well as the

landscape architect profession as such, turning to the more philosophical perspective. Supported by the term “intentionality” in phenomenology, Relph talks about how the place is needed as a starting point for a person's being in the world, this since we cannot be consciously aware of anything unless it is put in relation to something else, i.e. the place (Creswell 2004, pp. 37-38).

The place is thus a pre-scientific fact of life and we experience it subjectively different depending on who we are. As this work reveals a different perspective to site and its analysis, the genius loci/ spirit of place as well as the intuitive aspect in the primary questions become relevant too. This since it's the less visible elements and/ or “soft values” that are encouraged as crucial in the experience and understanding of the site per se. Logic conveys aspects to both analysis and design that cannot be denied, but the sensory, irrational and intuitive are also parts of human nature. To what extent these qualities manifest in the analysis and design ought to relate to how the site is viewed as phenomenon.

The primary insight of this work refers directly to the site, and the importance of making a clear distinction between its experience, analysis and design. The meaning of the various parts and what the designer brings further from each step, encourage a comprehensive analysis as well as picture of the site as a whole. The value of the unconventional perspective for the field of landscape architecture is the challenge and opportunity to think in a different way regarding site. Emphasizing what is embedded in the experience of the site at an early stage may deepen the understanding of it. The less visible, more abstract and spiritual aspects of perceived place and nature can in Sweden at present partly be described as valuable as so-called “cultural ecosystem services”, which are defined by Boverket as "spiritual and experiential values that contribute to our well-being, such as beauty, inspiration and recreation" (Boverket, 2020). As with ecosystem services, of which extensive work is undertaken to develop methods to convey their value, I think a nuanced debate is needed to highlight and clarify the value of the sensory oriented analysis/ experience of place and landscape. I believe that, from a holistic perspective - if we wish to be able to manage and develop the resources in the landscape as well as the common living environment, it is relevant to review our attitudes, perspectives and approaches, since the balance between different interests is the decisive factor.

### Suggested questions for further research:

- What implications would the understandings of place in this thesis entail for both landscape architecture theory and design practice?
- Should a more sensory oriented method for site analysis be integrated in the conventional practice of landscape architecture?
- What understandings in this thesis are relevant for the development of the contemporary framework considering site analysis?
- How can the different perspectives in this work be combined to partly illustrate a new theoretical basis in landscape architecture, but also what implications would be relevant in practice?

# Sammanfattning

## (Summary in Swedish)

### Bakgrund och problemområde

Detta examensarbete tar sin utgångspunkt i en nyfikenhet kring begreppen *genius loci*, intuition och okonventionell platsanalys. Begreppet *genius loci* – platsens själ, härstammar från Romartiden och fick under 70-talet en återupplivning inom arkitekturen av den norske arkitekten Christian Norberg-Schulz (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p.18, 23). Trots att begreppet således haft en betydande roll inom arkitektonisk teoribildning har det under utbildningen inte varit föremål för en djupare diskussion. Under utbildningen har jag även upplevt en konflikt gällande de platsanalyser vi fått lära oss och de personliga upplevelser jag haft på platser. De etablerade analysmetoderna av exempelvis Lynch, Gehl och Jacobs är i grunden logiskt inriktade och övervägande visuellt orienterade, med desto mindre utrymme för den upplevelsebaserade, sensoriska analysen. Logiken förmedlar aspekter till både analys och design som inte går att förringa, men det sensoriska, irrationella och intuitiva är också delar av den mänskliga naturen – hur manifesteras detta i en landskapsarkitekturs kontext? Intuitionens roll för design ses ofta som ett givet element, men dess praktiska tillämpning är inte lika självklar.

Detta arbete ämnar till att undersöka hur man i praktiken talar om och implementerar platsanalys och det även med koppling till begreppen *genius loci* och intuition. För att vidga sin förståelse för ett specifikt fenomen krävs en vilja till utforskande såväl som en öppenhet inför ett nytt perspektiv. Arbetet belyser detta genom att även ge exempel på alternativa analysmetoder och perspektiv på platser.

### Mål och frågeställning

Detta arbete syftar till att undersöka platsanalys med fokus på begreppen *genius loci* och intuition och målet är också att provocera det etablerade tillvägagångssättet för platsanalys genom att lyfta fram några okonventionella sätt.

### Forskningsfrågor

- Vad karaktäriserar platsanalys i dagens praktik för landskapsarkitekter?
- Vilken roll spelar begreppen *genius loci* och intuition för yrkesverksamma landskapsarkitekter i designprocessen?
- Bör implikationen av svaren på ovanstående frågor utvidgas?



## Avgränsningar och målgrupp

Arbetet förhåller sig till ett internationellt och multidisciplinärt forskningsfält. Begreppen platsanalys, genius loci och intuition är komplexa och innehåller många olika förhållningssätt inom forskning såväl som det landskapsarkitektoniska fältet. P.g.a. arbetets omfattning har jag begränsat antalet teoretiska källor och valde att använda Norberg-Schulz' definition som grund i relation till begreppet genius loci. För litteraturstudien fokuserade jag på några kända källor om platsteori, men jag tittade även på angränsande discipliner och utgick från några källor till humanistisk geografi, filosofi och okonventinell platsanalys för att få en bättre förståelse för de givna begreppen. Arbetet är skrivet på engelska i hopp om att nå ut och kunna engagera en större publik. Detta ställningstagande väcker emellertid vissa semantiska frågor eftersom intervjuerna (utförda av mig) gjordes på svenska och vissa uttryck inte översätter direkt till engelska. En del redigering behövdes därför i översättningen av det empiriska materialet, samtidigt som jag eftersträvade att behålla kärnan i det som sades. Till sin natur är arbetet akademiskt och riktar sig till förutom landskapsarkitekter och studenter till forskare och lärare inom det pedagogiska området för landskapsarkitektur och platsteori, såväl som de som är intresserade av platsteori och begreppen genius loci och intuition. Denna studie är främst en attitydstudie och en indikator på den aktuella situationen inom arbetsområdet, men hoppas även kunna ta upp frågor som är relevanta för utbildningsområdet för landskapsarkitekter såväl som för nutida platsteori och framtida teoribildning. Det är en kvalitativ studie med få intervjuer och påstår sig inte vara representativ för en större målgrupp, utan snarare en indikator på vilka ytterligare studier som behöver göras.

## Förhållningssätt, metod och genomförande

Arbetet inleddes med att jag gjorde en översiktlig informationssökning med avseende på nyckelorden genius loci, platsteori, alternativ platsanalys och intuition. Jag konkluderade att det inte fanns så mycket forskning som behandlade dessa begrepp på ett sammanlänkande sätt. För att ta reda på hur genius loci och intuition används i praktiken valde jag att göra en kvalitativ intervjuundersökning med arkitekter. Ett kritiskt analytiskt förhållningssätt präglade intervjuerna och bearbetningen av dessa. Innan intervjuerna skapades en intervjuguide och frågorna växlade mellan att vara generella och mer specifikt inriktade, där de specifika delades in i teman.

## **Intervjuguiden med arkitekterna innehöll**

### **följande teman:**

1. Personens bakgrund och yrke
2. Arbetsprocess
3. Platsen
4. Platsanalys
5. Genius loci och intuition

Med inspiration av den semistrukturerade intervjun och den s.k. Trattekniken genomfördes intervjuerna. De sex intervjuerna med arkitekterna utfördes på deras arbetsplats och tog mellan 50 min till uppemot 1,5 timme. Fem av dessa filmades och samtligas ljud spelades in.

Efter genomförandet av intervjuerna gjordes en litteraturstudie för att skapa en bättre förståelse för genius loci, alternativ platsanalys och intuition. Genius loci studerades med betoning på Norberg-Schulz teoribildning för detta begrepp och även i viss utsträckning den filosofiska inriktningen fenomenologi. Några källor som beskriver intuitionens roll i vetenskaplig och kreativitets kontext tas även upp.

I litteraturstudien lyftes några okonventionella perspektiv på platsen och dess analys genom en beskrivning av feng shui och geomantik, samt beskriver två platsarbetares tillvägagångssätt, varav en bioenergetic counselor/ bioenergetisk rådgivare och en dowser/ slagruteman. Dessa togs upp som exempel på implementering av ett okonventionellt tillvägagångssätt gällande platser och analysen av dessa.

### **Bearbetning av empiriskt material**

För att kategorisera det empiriska materialet från intervjuerna med arkitekterna kodades dessa. Genom att koda vissa avsnitt med avseende på särskilda nyckelord kunde jag i ett senare skede lättare identifiera uttalanden i det empiriska materialet i form av uppdelade segment. Temaindelningen för intervjuerna med arkitekterna var platsen och dess analys, genius loci och intuition. Genom att organisera uttalanden till en sammanhängande berättelse skapades mening till de studerade fenomenen samtidigt som de intervjuades svar och inställning till frågorna lyftes fram. En sammanställning av nyckelaspekter gjordes sedan efter varje ämnesavsnitt för att ge en bättre översikt.

## Resultat

Delar av det empiriska materialet från intervjuerna redovisades med hjälp av narrativ analys och berättelsen delades in i tre huvudteman - *platsanalys, genius loci och intuition* och till dessa skapades även underkategorier. Det okonventionella perspektivet togs upp i den litteraturstudie som gjordes.

Det som karakteriserade platsanalysen för arkitekterna var övervägande visuellt och tekniskt orienterade metoder, exempelvis landskapsanalys med fokus på geologi, geografi samt platsens historia och bakgrund. Den tidigare relationen till platsen tillsammans med dess kulturella kontext lyftes i få fall och ansågs då skapa en förväntan om platsen och därmed påverka upplevelsen och analysen. Vid flera tillfällen omnämns platsen som tom eller blank, och i några fall gavs fokus till vilka skyddsvärda element som fanns på platsen. Upplevelsen nämndes inte i direkt relation till platsanalysen förutom i enstaka fall.

De flesta av arkitekterna menade att de använde begreppet *genius loci* och, i likhet med det som var utmärkande för platsanalysen, associerades begreppet med en förståelse av platsens förhållanden, historia och bakgrund. Det betraktades också som ett nyckelord för konceptualiseringen av projektet och några av arkitekterna relaterade även begreppet till Norberg-Schulz. Det beskrevs även som ett personligt förhållningssätt till yrket och i vissa fall kopplades det till platsens "mjuka värden". I en av intervjuerna associerades begreppet med något mystiskt och/ eller övernaturligt, med tillägget att detta inte var något som personen trodde på. Tiden ansågs påverka *genius loci* för de flesta på det sätt att minneslager från tidigare händelser lämnade sitt märke på platsen och gjorde dess essens föränderlig.

Gällande intuitionens roll i designprocessen var den närvarande hos samtliga arkitekter och omnämndes som den initiala inspirationen, glädjen och lusten i projektet och den kopplades även till abduktion, d.v.s. förmågan att mobilisera rätt kunskap vid rätt tillfälle. Gällande en eventuell fara med intuitionen lyftes den sociala hållbarheten fram och den eventuella risken att fastna i sin egen bubbla. I relation till platsen sågs i få fall en koppling mellan intuition och *genius loci* – som ett instrument sågs intuitionen kunna hjälpa till att definiera det svårfångade *genius loci* genom ren intuitiv impuls eller upplevelse.

### Ett okonventionellt platsperspektiv

Syftet var även att lyfta ett okonventionellt perspektiv och tillvägagångssätt till plats, vilket litteraturstudien gav flera exempel på i form av Feng shui, geomantik, samt två platsarbetare och deras metoder. Gemensamt för de okonventionella metoderna är hur platsens mindre

synliga aspekter ges hög prioritet i både analys och tillvägagångssätt. I både feng shui och geomantik anses platsen influerad av subtila jordenergier vilka också avgör hur platsen bör designas. Geomantiken fokuserar även på att detektera psyko-spirituella rester på platsen, vilka anses påverka dess karaktär och inneboende kvalitéer. Platsen anses kunna befinna sig i ett tillstånd av trauma, vilket behöver förstås och åtgärdas av geomantikern. Inom Feng shui används en särskild kompass som instrument för att analysera påverkan av jordisk och kosmisk energi på platsen.

Karaktäriserande för de två platsarbetarna, Lea (bioenergetisk rådgivare) och Dean (professionell slagruteman) var att de kunde få information om platsen som var både kvantitativ och kvalitativ. I platsanalysen verkade de använda sin sensoriska förmåga i större utsträckning än den visuella, vilket inkluderade kroppsliga förmågor och de känslor som uppkom på platsen.

### Perspektiv som möts – slutsats

Ingången till arbetet var huvudsakligen ett intresse för begreppen *genius loci*, intuition och att jag fann de under utbildningen prövade analysmetoderna för platser som bristfälliga. Detta arbete har genom en kvalitativ intervjuundersökning påvisat vissa attityder till nämnda begrepp och indikationer på implementeringen av dessa. Den verkliga applikationen av begreppen och deras innebörd är något att undersöka och diskutera vidare.

Gällande det faktum att platsanalysen bara i enstaka fall ställdes i direkt relation till upplevelsen tros bl.a. bero på metodvalet och upplägget med intervjufrågorna. Visuellt och tekniskt orienterade metoder var den övervägande direkta responsen i fråga om analysmetoderna, men det framkom i den senare behandlingen av materialet att även abstrakta element som intuition, *genius loci* och då även indirekt upplevelse kunde kopplas till analysen av platsen. Även om dessa inte nämndes i direkt relation till frågor om platsanalysen, är det totala intrycket att de ingick i denna.

*Genius loci* relaterades, i likhet med platsanalysen, av de flesta till platsens förutsättningar, bakgrund och historia och platsens mjuka värden framhölls i enstaka fall. Tiden ansågs påverka *genius loci* på ett sätt som skiljer sig från Norberg-Schulz perspektiv, där den mer ses som en extern faktor som kan påverka platsen på en ytlig nivå – den kan därmed inte helt nå och förändra platsens inneboende själ (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p.18). Mitt intryck är att *genius loci* ändå kan sägas reflektera tid med avseende på sociala strukturer i modern tid, i ett sekulariserat samhälle som Sverige finns det förmodligen vissa begränsningar för vilken form

ett begrepp som *genius loci* kan anta. Att övervägande koppla begreppet till platsens förutsättningar, bakgrund och historia är den "förnuftiga" användningen av begreppet. Risken med detta förhållningssätt kan dock vara att man berövar *genius loci* dess essentiella mening och går miste om del av begreppets potential.

Intuitionen konceptualiserades i designprocessen beroende på arbetsprocessens olika steg och även designerns eget medvetandemässiga förhållningssätt. Den beskrevs på sätt som kan härledas till den vetenskapliga abduktionen och även till det steg i den kreativa processen som enligt Lawson beskrivs som steget *illumination* och är även, i likhet med den kreativa processen, svår att sätta in i en linjär struktur (Lawson 2005, p. 150). Studien ger också exempel på att den strukturella kontexten avgör ifall intuitionen kan medföra en fara i arbetsprocessen eller ej.

Arbetet har gett insikten om vikten av att i platsanalysen göra en tydlig distinktion mellan de olika delarna och höja medvetenheten om implikationen av varje del. Denna insikt kopplar även till det okonventionella perspektivet, vars värde för landskapsarkitektur är utmaningen och möjligheten att tänka på ett annorlunda sätt i förhållande till platsen. Detta då arbetet indikerar att förhållningssättet till platsen påverkar dess analys och design. Resultatet tyder även på att den sensoriskt inriktade upplevelsen av platsen innehar en större del i den okonventionella analysen än i den traditionella. Med avstamp i fenomenologin beskriver Relph platsen som utgångspunkten för det mänskliga varandet och det faktum att vi inte kan vara medvetna om något utan att ställa det i relation till något annat, d.v.s. platsen (Cresswell 2004, p 37-38). Upplevelsen bör således vara en obestridlig del av analysen, vilket studien också visar att den är. För att undersöka hur både förståelsen av platsen och designen av denna skulle påverkas, föreslår arbetet att den upplevelsemässiga delen medvetandegörs med inspiration av det okonventionella perspektivet.

Vi tolkar platsen subjektivt olika beroende på vilka vi är och de mindre synliga, mer abstrakta och andliga aspekterna av upplevd natur och landskap kan i nuläget delvis beskrivas som värdefulla genom att definieras som s.k. kulturella ekosystemtjänster, vilka av Boverket beskrivs som "andliga och upplevelsemässiga värden som bidrar till vårt välbefinnande, till exempel skönhet, inspiration och rekreation" (Boverket, 2020). Logiken förmedlar aspekter till både analys och design som inte går att förringa, men det sensoriska, irrationella och intuitiva är också delar av den mänskliga naturen. I vilken utsträckning dessa egenskaper manifesteras i analysen och designen torde relatera till hur platsen ses som fenomen.

I likhet med ekosystemtjänster - som det pågår ett omfattande arbete med att utveckla metoder för att förmedla värdet av, behövs även en nyanserad debatt för att synliggöra och tydliggöra värdet av den sinnligt orienterade upplevelsen av plats och landskap. Den avgörande faktorn är avvägningen mellan olika intressen och jag tror att om vi ur ett holistiskt perspektiv önskar förvalta och utveckla resurserna i landskapet och den gemensamma livsmiljön, är det relevant att granska våra attityder, perspektiv och tillvägagångssätt.

Föreslagna frågor för vidare forskning:

- Vilka konsekvenser innebär förståelsen för plats i denna avhandling för samtida landskapsarkitekturteori och designpraxis?
- Bör en mer sensoriskt orienterad metod för platsanalys integreras i konventionell praxis inom fältet för landskapsarkitektur?
- Vilka förståelser i denna avhandling är relevanta för utvecklingen av det moderna ramverket med tanke på platsanalys?
- Hur kan de olika perspektiven i detta arbete kombineras för att delvis illustrera en ny teoretisk grund i landskapsarkitektur, men också vilka konsekvenser skulle vara relevanta i praktiken?

## References

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### Interviewed architects

Thorbjörn Andersson October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019 10.00 AM, at Sweco in Stockholm

Andrea Eneroth October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 10.30 AM, at Archus in Uppsala

Bengt Isling October 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 11.00 AM, at Nyréns in Stockholm

Rolf Johansson October 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 13.30 PM, at SLU, Ultuna

Ingalill Nahrungbauer October 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 10.00 AM, at Archus in Uppsala

Ulf Nordfjell October 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 15.00 PM, at Ramböll in Stockholm

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